

LETTERS

TO

FRIENDS AT HOME

FROM

JUNE 1843, to MAY 1844.

BY AN IDLER.

CALCUTTA:

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M.DCCC.XLIV.

Dedication.

TO

LORD ELLENBOROUGH,

LATE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA.

MY LORD,

It is not twelve months since I had the honour of addressing you as Governor-General of India. Had you retained that position I should have dedicated these humble pages to some inferior personage, if, indeed, I had dedicated them at all.

I am not, my Lord, among those who are much surprised at your fall. I knew

you were powerfully supported, but I also knew there must be a limit to human endurance, and I have lived in the hope that the patience of your honourable masters would be exhausted before irretrievable ruin overtook us. You did me the honor, as I was credibly informed, to read my former brief address, and you will remember that while alluding to some higher office which you had hinted might be within your reach, I suggested the possibility of your losing your present one.

Whether your Lordship's shadowing of coming events will be equally happy remains to be seen. I shall not speculate upon it, for though it be well to face dangers bravely, there is no necessity to meet them half way: in the mean time I may express my sincere gratification that your Lordship's time is at your own disposal for the furtherance of the wildest ambition—in any other land.

Of all men in India Lord Ellenborough must have been most surprised at Lord Ellenborough's recall. Appointed by a Ministry which is to all appearances as

firm as when the destinies of the Empire were entrusted to him, and virtually presided over by Lord Ellenborough's especial patron, in Parliament he was very strong. Among the Court of Directors there was a decided preponderance of Conservative politicians, men either directly supporting the Government with their votes or aiding them with all their influence: he might well think that nothing could shake him in his seat, and nothing could have done so but that which he was least able to estimate—his own imperious nature, his impatience of control—and the consequences of an ambition that would stab the peace of Asia in the pursuit of a wild and unhealthy excitement. He has not only been shaken, but toppled down; the proud man has been rebuked, the dignity of the law has been vindicated, the prestige of irresponsible power is no more.

I am aware, my Lord, that it is not courtly to speak the truth; I am aware there are those who will affect to think it ungenerous to tell it to your Lordship's face in the hour of your humiliation, but I

have no sympathy with such people ; I can no more bide their time than I would avail myself of it when it comes. A public man is public property ; he is pleased to bask in the sunshine of a people's applause, and must face the winter of their discontent when it bursts around him. If he has meant well no reproach will lastingly disturb him, and if he has not he will be insensible to it. Cato retired to his birth-place to die in peace, and Caligula was without remorse when assassins were at his door.

My Lord, there is a duty from which no public writer who deserves to be respected will shrink ; it is to disregard all private considerations, and deal with the great men to whom power has been delegated as stern justice may demand. You despise the Press, but you cannot in your heart deny that this is one of it's solemn obligations. Silence when there is aught to reprove is the flattery of a coward, and if it be not as odious as the sycophancy of those abject creatures who haunt the great, without a thought of moral grandeur, it is

a blot on his reputation who observes it, and a wrong to the world for which he can offer no adequate redress. In bright examples are the incentives to public virtue, in fearless exposure of wickedness or weakness liberty has one of it's surest safeguards. The law knows this, and will no more lay it's finger on the man who arraigns the prince than on him who questions the peasant.

I am prepared, my Lord, to go further than this liberty with the living ; I would take it with the dead. If the grave were to protect a man's public life from dissection, he who went down to it's dark chamber having neglected the golden opportunity given him by God to benefit his fellow-creatures—who had lived to no end but his own gratification—would die without being even of so much service to the world as the felon who expiates murder on the scaffold.

The Romans, my Lord, as your classic reading will have taught you, recognized and acted upon this right to make free with the vices and follies of the great, living or

dead, in their triumphs or their funerals, for the public instruction. Gibbon, reminding us of this custom, tells us it was practised in the funeral of Julian. I am induced to quote a passage from the great historian, which many perhaps will think, with one or two slight verbal alterations, a not unhappy sketch of a distinguished character—not dead but deposed.

“The Comedians, who resented his contempt and aversion for the Theatre, exhibited with the applause of a Christian audience, the lively and exaggerated representation of the faults and follies of the deceased Emperor. His various character and singular manners afforded an ample scope for pleasantry and ridicule. In the exercise of his uncommon talents, he often descended below the majesty of his rank. Alexander was transformed into Diogenes ; the philosopher was degraded into a priest. The purity of his virtue was sullied by excessive vanity ; his superstition disturbed the peace, and endangered the safety, of a mighty empire, and his irregular sallies were the less entitled to indulgence as they

appeared to be the laborious efforts of art, or even of affectation."

Julian was a Christian and turned Pagan when he achieved the Supreme Government; his parallel, in many respects, has at present only led the world to believe such conversion probable.

My Lord, this is a slight digression which I trust you will pardon. I have been led into it by caring to meet, what perhaps I ought to have despised, the cavils of those who would hedge with divinity not only a king, but any lesser creature whose smile might give promise of future advancement, though his actual power had passed away. I now proceed with my theme.

You came to this country, my Lord, with the words of peace on your lips—God knows what was in your heart, but I believe honesty of purpose. I think you meant well, that you desired to reduce the expenditure of the country, to increase the revenue by developing its resources, to foster the Arts and Sciences, and, in your own language, to elevate the character

and better the condition of the generous and mighty people committed to your charge.

It would be shocking to imagine that speech of your's, my Lord, delivered in solemn mockery, yet had it been so how could you more bitterly have made us feel it. Let those who can reconcile your words at home with your actions here, do it—believe me, my Lord, it is essential to the integrity of your public character. I ask them to reconcile your address to the Court of Directors with your address to the people of Calcutta. You told the former that your aim would be to enrich the country, to emulate the magnificent benevolence of the Mahomedan Emperors, and to the latter you spoke of India being a great Camp to be kept by the sword! Few imagined, my Lord, that when you talked of enriching the country, you proposed doing it by territorial aggrandizement and the spoils of unjust war.

This is no place for an examination into your policy—I have to deal only with results. Your Lordship's reign was

something more than two years, and we have had peace for a few months, devoted to preparations for new wars, while the benevolence of your rule has been at best no more than benevolent intentions, reaching us only in rumours which the most generous might be excused for doubting. Even with war on his hands, a wise ruler will never forget to deserve the favour of those to whom all wars are odious, and to mitigate the displeasure of such as may only dissent from his immediate policy. He will, my Lord, affect an interest, even if he does not feel it, in the institutions of his country—it's hospitals, it's colleges, it's schools ; he will countenance undertakings of great enterprize in the cause of human improvement, if he does not originate them, and, in a word, assume the virtue of caring for his people if he have it not. Whatever credit may attach to the boldness of being undisguisedly indifferent to public opinion is your's, my Lord, without dispute.

My Lord, I will not say you have been indifferent to the welfare of this country,

for who can read another's breast, but I think you have given no evidence of having it much at heart. I know no single act of your government, emanating from yourself, that speaks sympathy with the benighted millions of this empire, and I can but account for the ready oblivion of all you pledged yourself to attempt, by believing that Military success—with which you had nothing to do—dazzled, bewildered, and finally obscured the good sense which sketched a career promising honour to yourself and real glory to India.

It was but one step from indifference to those unrequired pledges of pacific rule, to contempt for those to whom they were given. Your strength, my Lord, when you left England was in the knowledge that you possessed the confidence of the Court, the Government, and the Crown. These are your own words; I have neither added to them nor disturbed their order.

The Court stood first with your Lordship as was right it should, and not until you insulted your employers did you des-

prise them. If, my Lord, you have preserved the confidence of Her Majesty's Government it has been insufficient to preserve your appointment, and if you have your triumph, India is not without her's.

Return, my Lord, from your adopted to your native land. Take back with you your physical force doctrine, which in England you may propound inviting only the derision of the people, here it would lose us the Empire whenever understood and reduced to practice. Go, my Lord, the Friend of the Army, if you can believe it, but not the Friend of India, as your conscience will tell you hereafter. My Lord, I would not have your future reflections on a glorious position misunderstood, a great opportunity for the exercise of a noble philanthropy thrown away, for all the lacks you will carry with you—the untouched savings of your brief career.

I might end here, but I prefer putting down my pen justified by the generous, noble, Christian language of one of your Lordship's predecessors. God help this

country when his sentiments are repudiated by its rulers.

The following, my Lord, are the words of the man who first freed that Press you have held in contempt, when addressing for the last time the Students' of the College in this, as your Lordship has termed it, the Commercial Capital of Bengal.

“Conscience prescribes the extension of gentle, cheering, parental encouragement to the millions whom Providence has arrayed beneath our rule. Wonderful and unexampled rule! Let it never be forgotten how that supremacy has been constructed. Benefit to the governed has been the simple but efficacious cement of our power. As long as the comforts and the gratitude of the Indian people shall testify that we persevere in that principle, so long may Heaven uphold the domination of Britain here:—no longer.”

These are the parting words of the Marquis of Hastings. You, my Lord, have never addressed yourself to a College or a School, but to the people of India you

have proclaimed the Camp, the Sword, and
Physical Force !

We cannot recall a Hastings from the
grave, but it is something to know that an
Ellenborough may be stricken down.

I have been,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's faithful observer,

AN IDLER.

July 11th, 1844.

PREFACE.

The following letters, like those which were reprinted last year under the same title, have appeared in the *Overland Calcutta Star*. The object in republishing them in this form was, as then stated, to preserve a slight record of some of the principal events that occupied public attention during the period they embraced. The volume was favourably noticed by the Press, and a second year's letters are here collected.

A London critic has objected, that they lose such importance as might otherwise possibly attach to them by being anonymous. The writer has not aimed at forming the opinion of others; a light epistolary style is not suited to the grave argument that would be necessary to such an end: he has simply noted down his own impressions. With reference to facts of public interest, the accuracy with which they are recorded is readily tested by reference to contemporary writers.

E r r a t a.

Page.	Line.	
3	25	For <i>off</i> , read <i>of</i> .
24	last line	For <i>herd eliveries</i> , read <i>her deliveries</i> .
28	23	For <i>of</i> , read <i>off</i> .
33	10	For <i>overweaning</i> , read <i>overweening</i> .
38	10	For <i>spelation</i> , read <i>speculation</i> .
82	8	For <i>twadding</i> , read <i>twaddling</i> .
97	2	For <i>come</i> , read <i>came</i> .
103	7	For <i>empoly</i> , read <i>employ</i> .
104	last line	For <i>to which</i> , read <i>to wit</i> .
110	15	For <i>Gazettee</i> , read <i>Gazette</i> .
148	10	For <i>four other</i> , read <i>three other</i> .
201	21	For <i>republication</i> , read <i>reduplication</i> .
—	23	For <i>voir du fait</i> , read <i>voie du fait</i> .
204	10	For <i>magniloquent</i> , read <i>magniloquent</i> .
222	26	For <i>to</i> , read <i>of</i> .
229	16	For <i>Suched</i> , read <i>Suchet</i> .

Calcutta, June 8th, 1843.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

There have now appeared three of your letters in the *Calcutta Star*. I recognised your style before I saw your signature, and should have written you last month to correspond directly with your humble servant, had I not desired to close the first dozen of my letters to the esteemed friend with whom they began.

I perceive, Squab, that you are the same wicked wag and professing Radical as ever ; but in politics never was your particular delight : I doubt whether you would ever have thought of them unless the follies of party had attracted alike your satirical pencil and pen. I suspect you found more to laugh at in musty Toryism than in Whiggism, and the other two isms of party together, and that this decided you. Whiggism has become so contemptible, that Radicalism is the only refuge for a reasonable man. Chartism and its

five points must stand over for the present, and *it will be a long future before the five are carried.*

If I have measured you wrongly in politics, and your heart should be more in the cause than I believe, I am sorry we should both have made a mistake. It is an unprofitable calling for an honest man, for there are too many rogues engaged in it. Only a man who can afford to make an amusement of public life should enter Parliament, for he may retire when disgusted ; the man who does it to serve his country will be abused by one side and scouted by the other, since the vast majority of both are bent only on serving themselves. It is enough to sicken one's faith in consistency of public character, when we see the discreditable exhibitions of the present day. Has Lord Brougham's mind given way, or is it only his temper ? How singularly far Horner appears to have seen into his character. I cannot believe such a man dishonest, and until upon some question that tests his adherence to the political principles of a long life he be found false, I shall believe that he is an apostate only from his party, or that the incredible mental exertions he has imposed upon himself have somewhat shaken his intellect. Apostacy from his party is a matter

simply between him and them, but apostacy from his principles would be a stigma on his character, that the all-surviving memory of his astounding talents must perpetuate for ages. Any man who was a Whig, must be false to himself to be true to them, for they have long abandoned the creed in which they laboured to tutor the rising generation: but I cannot defend Lord B. in the virulence of his attacks upon them, because it is accompanied with a fulsome laudation of men he must despise as politicians, and this proves a personal soreness and irritation unworthy so great a man. You are very severe upon him, though I am sure you will not deny that he is one of the master-minds of the age.

When poor Sir Francis Burdett damned his fame by turning his back upon his party and his principles together, I believe it excited very little astonishment. The public could not but regret it, because it was a slur upon the people whose idol he once was, but I repeat there was little cause for astonishment. Burdett was always an aristocrat, and a lust of notoriety alone made him a patriot,—pardon me for abusing the term: his ambition to be talked off was far greater than his ability to render himself famous: if he had felt he could achieve greatness, he would have been

a Tory all his life. It is proverbial that money made easily is lavishly spent, and he is an instance that the same may be said of public character. He got it cheaply, and he parted with it without a thought of its value. And when? When he had been made all that he could be made, when other men had struggled into place for which he was utterly unqualified, and when the incense that intoxicated a foolish mind was no longer offered up. He became an apostate from principles without a blush, quitted the scene of public life without a regret in any human being, except for his degradation, and will shuffle off his mortal coil to be ignominiously remembered as "Westminster's Glory." Contrast this man with that fine old gentleman Byng. The latter was never half Radical enough for either of us, but he will carry with him to the grave the respect of men of all parties throughout the country, as one of the most straight-forward and consistent men that ever sat in Parliament.

Mr. Walter, of Bear's Wood, is another of your political Jim Crows. He came in for Berkshire as a Liberal; what he is now even the *Times* does not tell us, but it is very certain he is not what he was. The impudence of his correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle, *noscitur a sociis*,

touching the Nottingham business, in the face of the report of the Committee that ousted him is unparalleled, and Master Walter going down to stand in his shoes is pretty cool, is it not? It strikes me that if Nottingham keeps up its connection with these gentlemen, it will stand a pretty good chance of sharing the fate of Sudbury.

Then again you remind us of the Marquis of Londonderry, who threatens to quit the Tory camp because he did not get the Blues; hint that even republican Roebuck might perchance be black-balled at the Reform Club, had he again to pass the ordeal; (was he not an original member?) and tell us that the faith of Radical Leader is questioned. What! is a double shame, and so soon, to be brought on Westminster! My dear Squab, what does Frank Place say to all this? Don't you think now that these defections in Lords and Commons are enough to make all honest men exclaim,

“ A plague on both your houses ! ”

The parliamentary news by the April mail was indifferently entertaining. What a mess the Ministers made of the Somnauth Gates' proclamation after all. Could not they even manage to be consistent? Was it necessary that Peel and Stanley

should declare they could not defend it, that it had been the subject of a communication from the Government to Lord Ellenborough, and that the Duke of Wellington should be in such extacies about it, and pronounce it "a song of triumph." Why don't they get Lord Burgersh to set it to music? The recitative might be splendid, and, after seeing *Punch's* sketch of our hero dancing before the idol of Somnauth, I would suggest for the air, the one to which King David was dancing when his wife saw "and despised him in her heart;" or if something more modern should be preferred, I would recommend a medley composed of all the airs his Lordship has given himself since he has been in India. It could not fail to be very striking.

The Duke of Wellington appears to have the Cabinet under his thumb, and I apprehend it will prove to have been so when he is gathered to his fathers. It will be lucky for Peel should it happen any time before the Anti-Corn-law league is too powerful to be resisted, as he will then be enabled to meet them without having to face the determined hostility of a powerful body of high Tories, I verily believe powerful only because held together by the Duke. But I must have done with English politics, though

there is nothing much stirring in this part of the world.

Our latest news is that our excellent Governor General is on his way to Calcutta. He was a short time back positively to remain at Agra, then he was going to Scinde, then to Simlah : for the Scinde excursion the authority perhaps is doubtful, but for the others undoubted. On the receipt of the last Mail a change came over his arrangements, and he is now bound to the Presidency, and will reach it I suppose in due time if he does not change his mind. He is to tarry at Allahabad until the May despatches from London reach him. It is generally thought that his movement towards Calcutta has been the consequence of one of Peel's "communications," originating in the objections of the Court of Directors to his being away from his Council. This is very likely, but it does not necessarily account for the change, as he might have had his Council up to him; and with reference to the state of the Punjab, it is not improbable that this might have been directed had his object been solely to obey orders. It is possible that he is humming "Home, Sweet Home," and having (like a well-bred animal,) made intimations of the need of a successor, is waiting to hear on that

point. I have heard this afternoon that the *Queen Steamer* is ordered to be ready for sea by the beginning of next month, and I should not be surprised to find him off to Bombay or Suez. If he be destined to remain in office, which is most improbable, he may yet do something promising utility, and find people a peg whereon to hang some little praise : if he leaves us now he will depart neither respected nor lamented by the smallest circle of friends, and certainly not in peace, though "Peace in Asia" has been his constant boast. Saugor and Bundelcund are any thing but settled, and though we were told a short time back that it was not probable another shot would be fired in Scinde, nothing is now more probable than a renewal of hostilities. Strong parties of Beloochees are gathering in various directions ; in several districts the Collector of Revenue has been resisted, and the probabilities are that what has been taken by the sword will have to be kept by the sword for some time to come. Be this as it may, there must be some fighting before there is permanent peace.

Mr. George Clerk, Envoy to the Lahore Court, is to be Lieutenant Governor of the N. W. Provinces, and for this election, Lord E. de-

serves all praise, as Mr. C. is one of the first men in India.

Heaven be praised we have done with the Simla and the Gates' Proclamations as a matter of business, which we could not be said to have done here until they were disposed of at home. If we ever recur to them, it will be as papers which have received the same stamp in India and England. It would be well if Parliament could order them to be forgotten.

We are now of course looking for what will be said after the appropriation of Scinde has been duly considered. The "licentious press" of our small colony has had little or nothing to say in palliation of this wholesale robbery, and from the miserable hacks who live by lying and must therefore lie to order we may expect further marks of disapprobation. The difficulty the Government will have to grapple with, independent of right or wrong, will be the violation of the non-aggressive policy to which the triumphal songster pledged himself. My own opinion is that on this occasion he did not change his mind, that he always intended to lay violent hands on Scinde, and that his flourish about natural limits was the tinkling charm of taking phrase, which his weakness and love of momentary effect and political

clap-trapisms could not resist. Avowing, as he did, Peace in Asia, and his determination to preserve it, his mind was ever running on scarlet lace and feathers; and dwelling so promisingly on the blessing of peace, he took the earliest opportunity to regret he was not bred to the noblest profession, the profession of arms; as if the science of Government were not as noble as the science of war, and as if a hero were a greater man than the ruler of an empire who governed millions of his fellow-creatures in peace.

I have alluded to the state of the Punjaub. Since Runjeet's death things have been gradually going wrong. Shere Sing is said to be in a precarious state, and on his death the succession will fall on a child of about ten years of age, during whose minority it is next to impossible internal peace should be preserved without some external power. That power must be British.

We have had a false alarm of an intended rise among the Hill Chiefs in the neighbourhood of Subathoo, and it was said a plan had been organized for the destruction of the three European regiments stationed at that place and Kussowhile and that Shere Sing was prime mover. It ended in smoke, having originated in a version of the Khytul affair told by a native to a Serjeant who

thought he had a fearful discovery to make to his superiors. The whole station was in a state of excitement if not alarm, and every preparation was made for the reception of the enemy. It was not long before the matter was explained.

Dost Mahomed's friendliness with the Maharaja appears to have lasted as long as was convenient, as was anticipated, at least there are rumours of his having endeavoured to excite the Mussulman population during his route to Peshawur. The Dost arrived at Caubul on the 29th April in bad health and with prospects by no means flattering. The country is said to be in a disorganized state, and a large portion of it hostile to his cause. Nawaub Zeman Khan who was in chief authority fled on the approach of the Ameer, but the Kohistan has risen in his favour. Ameenoolah was exciting the Logur district to revolt, and Shoojah-oo-dowlah, son of Zeman Khan, was doing the like in the range of the Sufeild Koh, where he had taken refuge. Akbar Khan, remained at Jellalabad after his father went on to quarrel with his cousin Shumsoodeen, who had been offered the Government of the Kohistan before the insurrection broke out. The above information was published by the *Calcutta Star* between two and three weeks ago, and from a

source that leaves no doubt of its correctness, although it has not otherwise transpired. Thus you will perceive the Afghans are likely to have the full benefit of the legacy of anarchy and confusion bequeathed them in the parting document of Lord Ellenborough.

From China our news is very limited. A circular has been issued by Sir Henry Pottinger informing the creditors of the Hingtae and other Hongts that a further sum of Drs. 500,000 in the hands of the Cohong is ready for distribution among them.

Sir Henry has been appointed Governor and Captain General of Her Majesty's Land and Sea Forces in China, which is in keeping with the warm eulogy bestowed on him by Sir Robert Peel, and a proof of the sincerity of his wish that this Officer would retain his appointment, but I do not think he is likely to ~~do~~ so any great length of time as he is most anxious to return to England, and has reiterated his desire that a successor might be sent out. A letter from Hong Kong of April 6th, mentions that Lord Saltoun had met with a very serious accident in having been thrown from his horse over the face of the hill on which his house stands. He had several ribs broken, and sustained other severe injury.

We have news from Mauritius down to the 11th ultimo. The Agricultural interests are in a depressed state, and the planters have been soliciting permission to meet and consider what is best to be done, but without success. Sir William Gomm has been in correspondence with them and received a deputation from the body, but he deems public discussion unadvisable. It is said that specie has almost disappeared from the island and some remedy has been asked for this, and assistance in the distress thereby occasioned. The Government is of opinion that there are ample resources in the colony to meet all the pressure, and that they would be forthcoming if protected: it has brought forward a measure which the Planters deem insufficient. It is said that the returned coolies have taken away a great deal of silver, and that large sums in the aggregate are buried by the labourers on the island; certainly it is there is no coin, and unless some sound monetary system is propounded distress will hurry into ruin. Cooly emigration is going on steadily, but the system under which it is conducted is a very bad one. The evil may be exposed in a very few words. The Government pays a bounty of £7 per head on every labourer landed there. This is supposed to cover the expense of his emigration,

but in fact it does more, and supplies profit to some three or four parties whose services might very well be dispensed with.

But the greatest evil is the system of agency which prevails at Mauritius, and which extracts as much as Rs. 40 from the planter for every labourer supplied to his estate. The Government pays more than is necessary in the shape of indemnity, that unnecessary agents may gain a profit here, and when the cooly arrives he is made a traffic of which yields a golden harvest that comes out of the pocket of the planter, who might otherwise certainly afford to take three labourers for every two he can engage at present. It is perfectly true that the cooly has a right to go where and to whom he pleases on his arrival, and that the agent who has commissioned a supply has no property in them, but you will understand how far this provision is operative when you know that the agents have a mutual understanding that they will not interfere with each other. The number of agents then, all of whom make their profit, take so much which might be beneficially laid out in the colony, and if the present system as regards them is to prevail, the Government had better discontinue its bounty and take the emigration

into its own hands. I will quote on this theme—certainly one of the very greatest importance, and more particularly at this time when so much distress prevails in Mauritius—some passages from the *Calcutta Star*, which has lately been directing public attention to the subject.

“Between the planter and the emigrant we see no occasion for more than one agent ; at present there are four or five : all these persons make a profit on their share of the work ; with this we do not quarrel, we only say they are unnecessary, and that all they earn is money out of the pocket of the Government, the planter, and the cooly. The lowest agent is little better than a crimp, and something worse than a Ghaut Serang ; all that goes into his pocket is a premium upon kidnapping. We mentioned on a former occasion that the premium or indemnity paid by the Mauritius Government was Rs. 70 per head. If we add the additional premium of 5 per cent, paid for every five women per hundred male labourers above fifteen and up to twenty-five, it is perhaps not too much to put down the indemnity at Rs. 75. The actual cost of sending a cooly to Mauritius is certainly not more than Rs. 70, and at the very outside would not be more than Rs. 65 if there were no opposition

among those who make their livelihood by the trade, for so at present we must call it with reference to these parties. Taking it at Rs. 65 and allowing Rs. 5 per head for agency there cannot be a less profit on 10,000 coolies than half a lac of rupees. Let us also remember that the planter pays a premium of from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 for each cooly to the resident agent who supplied him. On 10,000 coolies this would be, taking the lower rate of Rs. 20, Rs. 200,000. Now we venture to say that one common agency in Calcutta on behalf of the planters, whether paid by a shipping fee or by a yearly allowance, should not average more than Rs. $9\frac{1}{2}$ commission for each emigrant, so that here again there would be a saving upon this number of Rs. 175,000!"

* * * * * * *

“ We think it impossible such a system should be allowed to continue, and that unless the planters should as a body put down these agencies, the Government is bound to withhold all indemnity and confine itself exclusively to a watchful superintendence of the welfare of the emigrant. In the figures we have given, (more in detail on a former occasion) of the expenses of landing an emigrant in Mauritius, we are quite certain we have erred on the right side, and put down the

sum at more than it need be, for it provides for the profit of three or four parties where one or two would suffice ; and we must not forget to say that we have supposed a sum to be given to the emigrant as a bonus which in point of fact does not go into his pocket, but is filched from him (we mean not all, but the greater part) under various pretences by the Duffadar, through whose hands he first comes and last passes. When the Act came into operation there were a large number of natives in Calcutta willing, and indeed waiting to embark, and at that time they were satisfied with a bonus of Rs. 8. The competition then was among the agents to obtain passage, and the terms from Rs. 40 to Rs. 55 without food. Now the competition is to procure emigrants, and while the passage, with provisions, has fallen from Rs. 40 to Rs. 45, the bonus has risen to Rs. 15, and frequently more."

I hope this matter will be taken up at home, for while the present system prevails emigration may fairly be called the *Cooly trade*.

In my last letter, (which I know you will have seen,) I mentioned that the day had been fixed for the presentation of the Court of Directors' Gold Medal to Dwarkanauth Tagore. There was a very large meeting of the community on the occa-

sion, in the hall of Government House, and Mr. Bird, the Deputy Governor, made a most appropriate address, which was well replied to by Dwarkanauth. The medal and chain were very massive and elegant: the inscription was, on one side, "To Dwarkanauth Tagore, from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, 1842"; and on the reverse, "Presented as a testimonial of their esteem, and of the approbation with which they regard the benefits conferred by him upon British India." Round this face of the medal is inscribed, "Hindu College, District Charitable Committee, Medical College, and other Public Institutions, Calcutta."

There was one passage in Mr. Bird's speech which was very happily introduced, because since the advent of Mr. George Thompson we have had a deal of noisy, unreflective, declamation among the Natives on the subject of their wrongs, in not being advanced sufficiently fast for their deserts. The Deputy Governor said:—

"But before I present to you this Testimonial, I wish to dwell for a few moments on the lesson to be learnt from it. It shews that there is every disposition in the highest quarters to reward merit in the Native of India, and that there is nothing in an Indian Sun, to prevent the growth

of those qualifications, and the exercise of those virtues, which lead to such rewards. But these distinctions are only obtainable after a long course of industry and perseverance. No one knows better than the distinguished individual now before me, how long he had to labour in obscurity and neglect. What prejudices he had to overcome, what difficulties to encounter, before he attained that high place in public opinion, which has brought him to the proud position in which he at present stands. Let me therefore exhort my Native friends who are looking for high situations, to profit by his example, to display in the first instance the same zeal, ability, energy, and perseverance in the discharge of their public duties, to satisfy the public mind that they possess the same high qualifications as the testimonial is intended to recognise, and then they may rest assured that they will not fail in obtaining such advancement, and such rewards, as may be justly due to their merits and services."

I may mention that Dwarkanauth talks of returning to Europe in October or November next. Mr. Thompson does not stay in India so long. He is off for Delhi to see His Majesty, for whom he is retained as an advocate to seek redress at home for the insult offered to his

dignity by Lord Ellenborough, who has ordered that the "nuzzurs" from the Commissioner and other officers who go to the palace on business shall be discontinued. He is thus deprived of the last symbol of sovereignty, and it is said that other proscriptive measures as to name and title are in contemplation.

The man is a nonentity but yet this is wrong, since all treaties which dealt with the family as possessed of territory, (the Southern Douab) from that of Allahabad to that of Delhi, which provided contingent pensionary support, (as now paid,) have acknowledged the abstract regality of the titular King. If you look in the *Overland Calcutta Star* you will see the agreement that has been executed between the parties, and you will say Mr. T. has not done so badly. For expenses home £300, and a monthly fee of £100, paid in advance for a year : add to this, say £10,000 as a further premium if he should succeed, and which I am told is the amount with which the blank in the last clause is to be filled up, and you will see he has found a better client than the Rajah of Sattarah or the "Bengal British India Society," a Society which broke down at its first meeting for want of attendance, and of which we shall probably now hear little more.

Purely local news, God bless you, I have none to tell!—Yes, an item of the most melancholy character. We have lost the best friend we had, to wit,—our Ice. For the first time for some years our stock is exhausted, and we look for the Semaphoric announcement of an American ice ship with more interest than for the Aerial carriage, which will laugh all Semaphores to scorn when once on the wing. You speak of a model having flown; the papers mention nothing of the sort. Were you trying to take a rise out of us? It is as well it has not come over the Bay of Bengal lately; for we have had some heavy weather, in which birds even would have preferred the folded to the expanded wing. From the Madras Roads all the vessels had to slip and run, and only a few have returned: the Company's old Ship, *General Kydd*, came in here with only her foremast standing. We had the barometer down nearly as low as it was before the severe gale of 3d June last year, but the weather has cleared up^{*} after some strong breezes and heavy rain, which almost led us to believe *the* rains had fairly set in. Indigo prospects are generally excellent, and what will the Opium anti-productionists say, when they hear that the last Government sale realized more than £280,000! A deal

of nonsense has been written by some of your virtuous gentlemen at home on this subject. All we want is, that Government should stand fair with China, by giving up its growth of the drug, and placing a duty on its exportation.

Believe me,

My dear Squab,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, July 1843.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

Though you wrote not by the May Mail, I have good reason for knowing that you were not dead when it left, and I consequently address you, and preface my letter with a remonstrance against your neglect. I am about to pay you a compliment, and you must listen to the truth which is tacked on to it. You know so much of what is going on, and write so well, that not to hear from you is a double disappointment. We lose many items of interesting intelligence, and the pleasant vein in which they would have been told. Your letters are most acceptable, and your silence most unpardonable. Do you think that because you write for your own pleasure that is any excuse? Let me assure you it is none. You have no right to excite expectations if you are not prepared to gratify them. If you wrote to order, I should find some apology for you, in

taking it for granted you had been writing to a better order, but this idea cannot be entertained of a gentleman of ample fortune ; albeit, with a wife and nine children, a town and country house, two carriages and a seat in Parliament to keep up. If you would advance private and public calls upon your time as an excuse, they supply none. A gentleman who is fond of talking of his arm-chair can never be allowed to plead his engagements in answer to the charge I gravely bring against you of neglect of duty. Having thus administered what I trust may prove a salutary admonition, I proceed with more general matters.

The May Mail,, with news to the 6th of that month, arrived in Calcutta (that is the Express) on the 14th of June, thus reaching us in 39 days ! a speed never before accomplished, and therefore worthy note. The race was very close between the Bombay, and what we call the direct Overland route. When the *Sesostris*, Bombay Steamer, left Aden, our boat, the *Hindustan*, was getting under weigh. She arrived the day after the Express, and would have been off the town some hours sooner had she not been unlucky in her tides at the Sand Heads. As it was, we of course had her eliveries some days before the

bulk of the Bombay Mail was in ; indeed, what we have chiefly to complain of in that route, is that letters and papers come falling in “ small by degrees and beautifully less” for a week after our first advices.

Health and long life, with a good husband and a small dowry, to the young Princess, and our best congratulations to one another that the young lady was not a young gentleman. So good a report should have made the cannon that announced the birth bellow louder joy. A double charge then might have been fairly expended in consideration of the half charge in future years. Our Princes are never weaned from the public purse, and they suck so lustily that their support is no joke. Her Majesty has began one in three, and ought to be gratefully addressed for the consideration shown to her loving people.

But if we have added one member to the Royal Family, we have lost another. The old Duke of Sussex gone—the Duke I should say, for three-score and ten is no remarkable age for a Guelph. The English papers appear to have done him justice. Looking to the frailty of human nature, it is no small praise of a Prince to say he is not a bad man, especially our Princes who are brought up in a dangerous school, to wit, the school of

profligate expenditure. But we may speak affirmatively of his late Royal Highness, and say he was a good man ; and if he had no brilliant parts he had at least the good sense to prefer the countenance of the people to cringing to the Crown, and currying favour with his obstinate, bigotted old father, or his eldest brother, who probably despised him because he was a respectable man. His preferring Kensal Green Cemetery to a royal vault was in good keeping with his life. There are certainly some ghosts at Windsor with whom it would not be reputable to associate, and it is impossible to say how far from the rottenness of the flesh disembodied spirits may hold communion. Had the Duke gone down to a conference with a certain King, the former would have had considerably the best of it in the tomb, though he went through life comparatively on the shady side of the way. We may take it for granted that he will not visit the sepulchral vaults of Windsor, and in the snobbery of a public cemetery for vulgar dust, he is safe from the intrusion of a Patrician George.

Lady Sale's work was looked for with almost more interest than any of the anticipated arrivals by the last mail. It appears to have been thought a great deal of at home, and only its literary faults

are hinted at. In my opinion, it has much graver ones, and had better have been preserved as a private record of our Afghan disasters. It really adds nothing to our stock of knowledge, which alone could make it valuable to the public ; while it handles professional matters in a confident, slap-dash style hardly in keeping with a feminine pen. Nor can I say I think the charges of imbecility and cowardice against the dead should have been so broadly made. They may be perfectly true, but they are painful, nay degrading to read, and *cui bono* the publication ? The journal might have given us all that occurred, and the inference every reader would have drawn would probably have been the same, and the correct one. Had the journal been a history of affairs of which we knew nothing, the first, last, and only record of our misfortunes, it is difficult to say that anything should have been suppressed, but as merely an amplified statement of what we knew before,—and I refer not to Lieut. Eyre's book in particular, but rather to the knowledge we possessed as the facts transpired,—in my humble judgment there is much that might have been omitted. I give you my honest opinion of the book, and I am sorry it is not a more favourable one. Lady Sale's conduct is worthy all admiration. I confine my

strictures to her volume, and if you do not think them just, whistle them down.

And now turning from Afghanistan and the volumes to which it has given rise, we may expect in due time some histories from Scinde. Happily up to this time all has gone well, and we may rest tolerably satisfied that our only disgrace in that quarter will be the first,—the disgrace of having feloniously appropriated the property of others.

Some days ago—it was on the 1st inst.—we received news from a *Calcutta Star Extra* that Brigadier Roberts had attacked a force, about 3000 strong, under Shah Mahomed, on the 8th of June, and completely dispersed it. In fact, the fellows had not the civility to wait till our troops could salute them, but appear to have had a friendly fiend at their elbow, whispering, “Use your legs, take the start, run away.” They took the hint, and some Cavalry pursuing them cut up, (query, down?) about eighty: two guns, some standards and several prisoners were taken, the Shah among the number.

The above affair came off two days’ marches from Sehwan. Shere Mahomed, brother of the last captive, is at the head of a large force at Sukkurind, and as both Napier and Roberts are at him, his chances are but small. Thus you

see that with Peace in Asia we have still war in the last province added to the British Empire ! We heard something after the second general engagement in Scinde about the last blow having been struck ; we have been striking, or preparing to strike ever since, and certainly have not yet struck home. It is rumoured that General Napier is anxious to be relieved as his health is failing him. There is great sickness among our troops, and how should it be otherwise with men on active service and the thermometer in their tents ranging from 115° to 127° !

The gentleman who has put this last iron in the fire, I mentioned in my last was on his way down to Calcutta. He has not yet arrived, but is at this present time of writing at Dinapore—such at least he should be according to his proposed movements—and is looked for at Barrackpore on the 12th instant. At Allahabad his Lordship, who has had reason to look a little blue, took up his abode with one Mr. Mathews, an Indigo Planter, upon which the *Agra Ukhbar* observes, —“ the Prince of Indigo Planters has the honour of entertaining the Prince of Humbugs”, and it might be added, the humbug of princes ; for his “ dear brothers and friends,” are laughing at his beard in various parts of the country. In Gwalior

every thing is at sixes and sevens, and I cannot do better than quote to you a portion of an article upon the subject in this day's *Calcutta Star* :—

“ The Resident has been withdrawn ; the Government of the State is unacknowledged ; the parties favorable to a connection on terms of alliance and dependency, as heretofore, with the British power, are misused and ejected the country ; in short a revolution has taken place wholly subversive of the order of things brought about by British intervention at Gwalior, and consequently in spirit openly hostile to British influence and British interests, as concerned in the internal management of this lately allied state.

It is easy to see how facile would have been the avoidance of such a state of anarchy, had any measure been pursued but the fatal one of acknowledging an infant Scindiah, the adopted child, after her husband's death, of a Ranee, herself the wife of a Scindiah also adopted. One cannot conceive hereditary authority drawn out to a thinner, less substantial bond of allegiance than by this process of doubly posthumous adoption ; for the late Scindiah was adopted by the Baiza Bae as this child by the present, or rather lately dominant Ranee. The tie of family attachment, the influence of national sympathy is

by this process worn to nothing. The Mahrattas see in the stranger infants successively placed on the throne at Gwalior, no affinity with the great Scindiah of past times, one of the Lords of the hundred thousand horse which overran India, and almost restored the ascendancy of Hindoo dominion. The prestige of the name thus idly inherited is past away; and the idea of power attached to it, like the girdle of the White Lady, has 'dwindled to a golden thread so slight as to be hardly perceptible' by reason of the mixture of churls' blood in the family of a chieftain of name and fame. There is no doubt, as we have already at length set forth, but that the time had come to effect a radical change in the constitution of the Gwalior state, either by *subdividing* it into principalities, by giving life tenure to the Baiza Bae, or her brother Hindoo Rao, or by at once taking it as lapsed to the British Government, by whose sufferance alone it had been permitted to exist as a separate State. This great occasion was allowed to slip by, and in the place of adopting any measure akin to those above noted by us, a repetition of the old adoption policy was had recourse to; a very dilution of the dregs of any remaining influence which the waning titular authority of an actually extinct family might

yet carry with it. The consequences we have seen ; and we further see that such consequences having ensued upon the peculiar policy which he judged expedient, the present Viceroy of British India refuses to justify that policy by upholding the infant chief whom he has placed upon the throne, or vindicating the insulted authority of the British Government, whose ally has been displaced from power, and whose Resident has been disgraced and ejected. Where are we to find a key to the extraordinary supineness manifested in this important matter ? How explain why a statesman so jealous of his authority, and so persevering in the defence of his measures, in ordinary instances, should in this particular one tempt the risk of the most serious internal disturbance by remaining inactive at such an eminently critical period ?

We believe, to judge from the intelligence before us, and to draw conclusions by an inference which the obvious appearance of matters readily admits of, that the exposition of the enigma is to be found in the nature of the dispatches received by our present Ruler from home, on the subject of his interference with Scinde. Again and again have we drawn the contrast between legitimate and illegitimate interference as respects the ex-

ternal policy of the British Government : again and again have we cited Scinde and Gwalior, the one an instance of arbitrary aggression, of the provocation of opposition, of the spoliation of a territory, the rights of whose Princes had been violated in order to drive them to resistance ; the other, an example of mistaken, impolitic forbearance, of an affectation of high-minded indifference to territorial acquisition, of acquiescence in the overweening pretensions of parties who claimed as right hereditary that which even those they claimed in right of, held on shadowy sufferance. Rebuked by his colleagues in England for the adoption of a policy so indefensible as that of “*interference*” with Scinde, our present ruler has turned restive on their refusal to him of the undisputed right to an unquestionable free agency, and having been chid for “*interference*” where his policy was aggressive, he eschews ‘*interference*’ now with Gwalior, where policy requires it as defensive. Thus will he punish those who hesitate to support him ; “check me once, and I will not act at all.”

Bundelcund is unsettled, and a source of great anxiety to the Government, and requires such delicate management that Lord Ellenborough has reserved its relations, with those of Gwalior, and

the control of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories in his own hands, while appointing Mr. George Clerk to the N. W. Provinces, as I told you in my last was to be done.

From China we have no news of any great importance. There has been some correspondence between the authorities on the subject of smuggling, and Sir Henry Pottinger has issued a very strong proclamation in which he intimates that "he will as far as may be legal, aid and advise the Chinese Officers in whatever measures they may adopt to eradicate the evils herein denounced, and especially towards removing all British smugglers, and their vessels and boats from the river of Canton." He concludes by saying, "His Excellency further intimates, that such smugglers and their vessels will not receive protection in the harbour or waters of Hong Kong." The above alludes not only to smuggling of every description, but to the evasion of duties and shipping dues outwards and inwards, and which could not exist but with the connivance of the Chinese Officers. It is truly said by the *Canton Press*, that the wisest plan to check this is to reduce the present high rates of duty, and establish a new scale upon a moderate and equitable basis. As for the Opium smuggling on the coast, with that

we cannot interfere ; the Chinese must protect their own laws, but it is impossible for them to do so ! Their only course then is to admit it on a duty, and to this I believe it must come in the end. It will be as surely smuggled as it will be grown, and it would be grown even were this Government to attempt to prohibit it, which would be absurd. You may form some opinion of the demand and competition for the drug, when I tell you that at the last sale here for the year, on the 26th of June, upwards of 4,000 chests were put up, and realized Rs. 40,63,000 while the gross revenue of the season has been in English money £2,008,000, say net £1,650,000.

Of purely local matters I have no great deal to tell you. People say that Calcutta has been unusually dull, but the idle only are sensible of the alternations from grave to gay, and *vice versa* ; the busy know them but by report, and these in Calcutta may be summed up in the keranees, or clerks in public offices, the doctors, and editors of papers ; therefore the old saying, “ What every body says must be true,” may well be admitted here, for the over-fagged wretches I have alluded to may be set down as nobodies in society, albeit they are important personages in the community. The world of fashion hopes to be stir-

red up a little by his Lordship on his return, but as it is said he stops short at Barrackpore, and will only come into town on business, it is doubtful whether they will be gratified to any great extent. There have been some faint rumours of an Address on the interesting occasion of his arrival, but they must have originated with some malicious fellow for the sake of getting up a broad grin on the public countenance: we have some clever hands in the soap trade, but I doubt whether one with address enough to carry such a point. Lord E. before leaving Agra made the munificent gift of Rs. 100, or £10 sterling, to the Lady Abbess of the convent there, and again some hoaxer has set it abroad that he intended to present handsomer donations to the Nunnery here, and to the Roman Catholic Bishop, besides making the princely payment of Rs. 500 per month to the District Charitable Society, as was done by Lord Auckland. I suspect the object of the report about the Superioress of our Lorretto House Establishment (which I suppose I ought not to have called a Nunnery,) and the Papal Bishop was to alarm the timid Protestants at home, or perhaps make a diversion in his Lordship's favour in case the charge of encouraging Heathenism should not have died away. But there is no mistake

about the £50 per month to our main charity,—that is, I wish, there were not.

The Agricultural Society here has taken up the matter mooted at home touching the introduction of Indian Wheat on the same footing with American, transported to England viâ Canada, under the proposed Canadian Corn Bill. A special committee has been appointed to make the fullest enquiries as to means and cost of production, quality, transit, &c. &c., and I shall not fail to refer you to the report when it is made. I see no ground upon which our wheat can be refused on terms at least as favourable as that of any other part of the world ; but I am not prepared to say, looking particularly to the freight, that we should be able to undersell the lowest competitor for the home market.

The Landholders' Society has addressed Government on the subject of the Cooly Trade, pointed out the evils of the present system, and suggested a remedy. The paper was prepared by Mr. George Thompson, but as it is substantially a transcript of what had appeared in the *Calcutta Star*, and the substance of which I gave you in my last, I need say nothing more about it.

In one or two of my letters last year I alluded to the Steam Ferry Bridge Company, and men-

tioned that it was a break-down, not because the scheme was impracticable, but, but—but perhaps I had better not venture on reasons. Its affairs have been alluded to within the last month, and it appears that there is divisible among the shareholders the value of a small Steamer of 12 horse power—when it can be sold—and the unadjusted claim on the underwriters for one of the bridges which was injured on its passage out.

A little better venture than this River speculation is the Bank of Bengal, the shares of which I wish, with a sincerity it will be impossible for you to doubt, that we had one hundred between us. Fourteen per cent. on the year's transactions declared the other day at their half-yearly meeting! Of the Union Bank I may have something to write next month. The half-yearly General Meeting, made special on requisition, is to take place on the 15th inst. The special matters to be considered are “the propriety of altering the Rules relating to the qualification of Directors, and the discounting of Bills, and making advances of money, as well with reference to ordinary loans, as to a relaxation of the present Rule 23 as to advances on Shares, and the expediency of authorizing the Directors to exercise their discretion in the purchase of Shares in

certain cases ; also for the purpose of considering the propriety of allowing proxies in certain cases and under certain restrictions." I might say something on these points, but to shareholders at home it is better perhaps not to speak until the Meeting shall have taken place.

I think it was in my May letter I gave some particulars about the vacancy that had occurred on the Magisterial Bench by the removal of Mr. O'Hanlon, in consequence of what passed in the correspondence between him and Mr. Gordon, the Secretary of the Union Bank, but with him as a partner of the late firm of Macintosh and Co. That vacancy has been filled up by the appointment of Mr. Montriou, a gentleman of some standing at the Bar, and who came round to our Court from Bombay about ten months ago. There were several candidates and some with good interest. Mr. M. was recommended by his superior fitness, and it is creditable to the Government that it exercised its patronage so well. I assure you it is no small matter getting a good Magistrate in Calcutta, for the Police alone, which should protect the public, is an Augean stable. Mr. Gordon's situation as Secretary to the U. B. will, it is said, be vacant in October next, and that being, I believe, Rupees 2,500 a month, is a

pretty thing to scramble for, but these "good things" are all cut and dried before-hand, and I think I could now name the gentleman who will obtain it.

We have somewhat contradictory accounts as to Indigo prospects, but they certainly are not as good as they were last month. It is probable that the out-turn will be about 1,25,000 factory maunds.

And now from business again to an item of gossip. The marriage of Major General Nott, G. C. B., Envoy at the Court of the King of Oude, is announced to-day; it was hinted some little time back in the following lines:—

Strange the vagaries of the Fates !
We know not what's in store,
The gallant captor of the *Gates*
Is captive to a *Dore* !

The young lady is Miss Rosa Wilson Dore eldest daughter of Capt. Dore of H. M. 3d. Buffs.

You will see by the papers that young Greville, of the 11th Regt. of Cavalry, son of the Hon'ble C. Greville, one of the Clerks in Council, is dismissed the service for drunkenness. He went into the Mess Room of the 9th Lancers sword in hand, and made a clean sweep of every thing. The Commander-in-Chief's remarks are severe, but

two or three former escapades are said to have been overlooked. It is most distressing to see a young man's prospects thus ruined, but it would be as dangerous as unjust to let Officers escape when the same vice is visited so severely upon their inferiors. I am sorry to say you will see other dismissals for the same offence in this month's General Orders.

I don't very frequently write anything about Bombay, for they are well able to tell their own news, and can give it some eight or ten days later, but there is one matter on which I may say a word, as the Journals there appear to have been tongue-tied, I suppose horrified even to dumbness by their Bench. The Press of India, as you know, has been not a little slandered at home; and the slanderers will be squirting their venom, as Lord Brougham would say, with impudence re-assured now that they have the authority of the Bench. In a libel case against the *Bombay Times*, in which the damages should have been Re. 1, instead of Rs. 500, Sir Henry Roper threw out some very gratuitous insinuations that the Journal before the Court, than which there is not a more respectable and able print in India, was of the class of those (unknown in this country) which make a traffic of slander, and Sir Erskine

Perry went much further, and deliberately said, after a very ordinary flourish about the liberty of the Press, “ Unfortunately in the Indian Press individuals seem too willing to libel one another for their own private interests.” This is Perry of Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*, the Secretary of the Radical Society that met in bygone years in Leicester Square, and which you will perhaps remember. I cannot speak positively, but I doubt whether he has presided at three libel cases since he has been in India ! I have been here four years, and have only known four, and two of them arose out of one affair, and that a private quarrel, each party writing in his own paper. Does this, think you, justify the attack made on the Press ? I think not ; and am only a little disgusted that the Press, particularly that of Bombay, has lacked the spirit to speak of it as it deserves. I could not pass it over without a word. There seems some fatality attending the Bombay Bench. I remember it from 1824, though not with a continuous knowledge, but on and off it has been, I know not how often, in hot water with somebody or other about some thing or other, or about nothing. The last affair was with the Press and certain mercantile gentlemen connected with it, in which you will remember a memorial was sent home.

Having said a few words about Judges reminds me that our own esteemed Chief, Sir Lawrence Peel, who left us by the *Hindostan* on her last trip, is seeking to recruit his health in Ceylon ; he will not I expect return for two or three months.

I must break off ; it is 9 P. M. and much of this has to be married to immortal type before to-morrow morning.

Believe me,

My dear Squab,

Yours sincerely,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, August 9th, 1843.

MY DEAR MACKENZIE,

I alluded in my last to SQUAB to the forthcoming meeting of the Union Bank Shareholders: I naturally commence with the subject now, since it has occupied a much larger share of public attention here during the last few weeks than any other topic. I mentioned the purposes for which the meeting was made special. Only two of them were brought forward and of them one was lost, to wit, the proposition of increasing the qualification for a Director from 10 shares, or £1,000, to 25 shares, or £2,500. The time heretofore allowed for confirmation of the proceedings when any alteration has been made in the partnership deed was one month; it has been extended to six, with a view of admitting the written votes of absent members addressed to the Secretary or a Shareholder. I think this a wise alteration, for though such members lose the advantage of hear-

ing the *pros* and *cons*, they have the chance of getting them second-hand, and can at any rate if they please judge for themselves. But the really important changes contemplated, the allowing the Bank to advance money on its own shares and to buy them up in certain cases, came to nothing:—the one was repudiated by every body, formally put and unanimously negatived, and the other, which assumed the form of liberty to purchase the shares of Insolvent estates was withdrawn. The very general impression was that there were those who had exhausted all other means of raising money and were anxious to do it on their shares, and finding them not in general favour, considered the Bank, if it once had the power given to it, might be more liberal in its advances. I say this was a very common supposition, but it must be taken to have been altogether erroneous, for, as I have said, not a man could be found to father the unseemly bantling, nor even say a good word in its behalf. It had been thrust before the public under the countenance of about a dozen gentlemen, and the only explanation given of this circumstance was, that it was thought advisable to discuss at once all matters that had been in agitation. When this matter might have come on for discussion not one of these agitators

was to be found, and it has since been said it was the notion of a worthy gentleman who has two or three hundred shares, who is in no want of money, and who to the best of my belief never *borrowed a penny from the Bank or contemplated doing so*. Well, then, *this special meeting has ended satisfactorily as regards the disposal of these important topics*. One proposition was reasonable, and was carried; the rest were dangerous and were knocked on the head. Had the proposition for increasing the qualification been successful, I believe it would have been a fatal aggravation of the complaint under which the Bank has been for some time labouring, public distrust;—I do not mean of its stability, but its management, which has been thought to study the accommodation of a few, and to be in love with a line of business which if it were profitable without risk would not be banking, and which is in direct contravention of the provisions of the partnership deed. When it was proposed that a gentleman should not succeed his partner in the Directorship within one year, it was opposed on, among other grounds, the following; that the numbers from whom the Directors were ordinarily chosen were extremely limited, and it was stated that up to the day of election (the

day of the Meeting) it was very doubtful whether there would have been candidates enough to fill up the vacancies of the retiring Directors. Now if this be so, why should the body be further diminished by more than doubling the qualification? *Either this would be the case, or we should have accommodation transfers to qualify any party desired as a colleague, and this alone would put an improper power in the hands of the large shareholders.* It was said that Directors of a Bank with a paid up capital of one million sterling should have more than one thousand pounds staked. Now it appears to me that the amount of capital has very little or nothing to do with the matter, and that the man whose all, or the best part of whose capital is invested in the Bank, though it be represented by only ten shares, is quite as much interested in its well-being as the man who has five, or ten, or fifty times the number. Should the Cræsus of shareholders be a Cræsus, or even an independent man extra the Bank, then the small shareholder has in reality more at issue; for supposing the greatest disaster to befall the Bank, the Cræsus would be crippled, the smaller shareholder ruined. I believe the view entertained as to giving power to the Directors to pur-

chase the shares of insolvent firms, had reference to a supposed surplus capital. Whether originally the expression "certain cases" meant only *the* case that has been put forward I cannot say, but I think not. Two things are very doubtful, whether there is any surplus capital, and whether if there be this would be the simplest way of reducing it: it might certainly have the advantage of preventing such shares being sold below par, and so injuring the Bank, but on the other hand if the reduction be necessary, why should we wait for insolvent firms, an indefinite time in this city where, as is notorious, failures are so very few and far between. But is this the time for saying there is too large a capital? There is nothing to induce us to say so; much to lead us to the opposite conclusion. I believe a million is much more than could be safely and profitable employed in Banking operations, extend the signification of these words as much as you legitimately can, but you are aware that a very large proportion of the funds are unavailable, being locked up in loans on mortgage, &c. &c. and it will necessarily be sometime before the Bank can disentangle itself. That there cannot have been any superabundance of "the ready" is clear from this circumstance, that the Directors have

been raising money from the Bank of Bengal on Company's paper of the value of more than twenty-two lacks, and not merely as temporary accommodation ; for it, or by far the larger portion of it, has been in pledge for two years. The Bank of Bengal will not draw the interest and carry it to the owners' credit, and of course will not part with the paper that they may draw it unless it is replaced by other security. Thus the interest upon the Bank's Government Securities does not appear in their accounts, and though they will draw the arrears when they can redeem their deposits, the interest upon that interest has been lost. The Bank of Bengal was lending at about 7 per cent. when this loan was raised, and Co's. paper pays 4 ! You will say this certainly looks like having too much money, and that it is adopting a very sure way of reducing the capital without any introduction of new powers. Gentlemen have so much money that it is better to buy paper paying 4 per cent. than let their capital lie idle ; and anon they have so little money that they pledge their 4 per cent. paper to raise the wind and pay 7 ! Now if this had been for a week, a month, or a quarter, it still might have been more prudent than selling, but when it extends

over a time to be almost numbered by years, it cannot be satisfactory. An explanation was asked at the adjourned special meeting, but none was given; the Director who was spokesman for his brethren saying, a Committee of Finance had been appointed, and he should refer the querist to him, and that in the meantime shareholders would perhaps be satisfied with the assurance that measures would be taken to have the interest duly drawn and carried out, *as it unquestionably ought to have been from the first*. The gentleman who avowed this was, I am told, extremely indignant with the Press for the active part taken in the affairs of the Union Bank, and declared that Editors and correspondents wrote a very great deal of nonsense about what they did not understand! For Press you may read the *Star*, for of the two other daily papers, the *Hurkaru* and *Englishman*, one was silent without a reason and the other with a reason; it being that the circulation of the Bank was insignificantly small, and its other business of no public concern!

The half-yearly accounts were passed, but not without questioning, and a dividend was declared of 8 per cent per annum and the balance of profits, amounting to Rs. 1,13,069 : 8 was carried to the Reserve Fund.

This is a great deal to have written on one subject, but it is one of some interest to many at home, and the month has not been prolific in news.

From China there is nothing worth reporting. The Plenipotentiary had been, it was said, invited to Pekin. The American Commodore has his suspicion that there are vessels carrying the American flag which are not entitled to it, and he laid hands on one and sent her with her papers, sealed up to the American Consul at Macao : that gentleman, who had signed them, pronounced them all right. It is believed that some of these craft are in reality English-owned, and that arrangements are made by which ostensibly the vessel may be entitled to ask for the Star and Stripes.

From China we heard of the session of the Sandwich Islands, but that acquisition is no news to you. Colonizing is only another word for civilizing, and for my part I think, politically, a little wrong may be done to the few for the benefit of the many, though to take what is offered is no wrong.

From Scinde intelligence is slack. I mentioned in my last that Brigadier Roberts had defeated Shah Mahomed, and dispersed his force

on the 8th June, and with Napier was on the trail of his brother Shere Mahomed. Captain Jacobs with a small force came upon him on the 14th June, when the gentleman quickly sheared off, after a short but dashing affair on our side, and escaped to the Desert with but ten or twelve followers. The worst enemy we have is sickness, and the returns under this head are very heavy. Napier is said to have suffered severely and to be most anxious to return. Rumour has it that he is to succeed Sir Thomas McMahon at Bombay, who goes home, it is said, in dudgeon at Sir Hugh Gough's appointment to the office of Commander-in-Chief. The *Queen* Steamer started for Galle and Bombay this morning, having several officers on board, among the number, General Simpson as second in command in Scinde. I apprehend he will be first shortly after his arrival by relieving Sir Charles. Sir Hugh Gough landed here this morning, and was received with all the honours.

Your June Mail arrived here on the 17th of July. You are particularly quiet about Scinde; I suppose Ireland monopolizes public attention. One hardly likes to commit one's-self to a prophecy, and in Irish matters particularly it may be best, and certainly Irish, to wait till the event

has happened ; but I should say, the cry for Repeal will subside “in the embrace of joy” of a whole people that it was not listened to. If ought comes of this anti-Union Movement it will probably be that the Union is re-Peel-ed,—shown to be a bond that never can be broken. Passive resistance to the laws is a very fine thing for gentlemen to preach, but not a very convenient one for common people to practice ; they knot a scourge for their own flogging. As for the leading Agitators they have no moral status. If they are doing their duty now they have long sadly neglected it, and are therefore not to be trusted. The pretence that they have lived on in hope of better days is impudent enough : with all its grievances Ireland never had so few as at present, and she would have fewer if she had not so many “ patriots” and more working friends.

I think I have expressed my opinion once or twice about the Law Commission here, and in common with every body else who knows what it has done,—no, what it has left undone, and how incompetent any Commission settling itself down in Calcutta would be to do any thing, shall be truly glad to hear it has been abolished. Lord Ellenborough is just now in the Board-abolishing vein, and it is earnestly to be hoped he will

not let this extravagant imposition escape at least a strong recommendation that it be forthwith removed. But I am led to the subject now from the fact of Sir Lawrence Peel having been offered by the last Mail, as I am informed, the legislative seat in Council, last occupied by Mr. Amos who presided also over the said Commission. A lawyer is certainly essential to the Council, and a better man than the Chief Justice it would have been impossible to select: whether he will accept the appointment or not I cannot say: he is, as I mentioned in my last, absent from Calcutta. The appointment is certainly not so distinguished a one as the Chief Justiceship, but it is less laborious, and the delicate health of Sir Lawrence may weigh with him: still on the whole I should doubt his making the exchange, and I am very sure the Bar will be sorry if he does.

Lord Ellenborough arrived at Barrackpore on the 12th ult., and took his seat in Council here three days after, his first act being the appointment of the Deputy Governor, the Hon. Mr. Bird, as *Deputy Governor of Bengal*. This was one of his Lordship's wise acts, and due acknowledgment has been made of the same on all hands. It is hoped that this arrangement may never be departed from, as the duties are fully

sufficient to occupy the attention of the ablest man, and we are not very likely to have a Governor-General who will not find enough to do in guiding the political relations of the empire and providing for the general interests of its people.

The Military at Barrackpore gave his Lordship an entertainment in the shape of a Ball and Supper shortly after his arrival, and the affair went off very well. Some hundreds of people crammed into some small rooms could not damp the enthusiasms of this welcome back of

WELCOME LE

as the lamps had it outside, and which is reported to have meant—Welcome Lord Ellenborough ! The speechifying after supper is reported to have been most orthodox ; compliments of the most gratifying description flying about and hitting people so full in the face as to put them almost out of countenance. Lord Ellenborough was very great about his regard for the army, but put all civil jealousy out of the question by assuring the company that he was about to settle down as a country gentleman. If there be any jealousy, it will be on the part of the lovers of this, (or any other) Lord in Calcutta. The great

house here is untenanted, the little one at Barrackpore is to be the Country Box. The country gentleman will be Governor-General, say twice a week for a few hours in Calcutta, and the rest of the time hob-a-nob with his country neighbours. It has been said there was some neglect, if not slight, in allowing Barrackpore to monopolize the honour of an entertainment, and Dum-Dum has actually taken steps to be equal with its brother Station ; but in justice to Calcutta I must say if it has been dumb, dumb, it has been purely out of respect to his Lordship's retiring habits and country predilections. That he desires to be as little of the Governor-General as possible is evinced by the following recent document.

“NOTIFICATION, August 3d, 1843.—Numerous applications having been made by Gentlemen at the Presidency for private audiences of the Governor General in matters relating to their private interests, it may be convenient that Gentlemen generally should be informed that it is not the custom of the Governor General to give private audiences on such matters. Any representations relating thereto which Gentlemen may deem it expedient to make, they will be Pleased to make in writing through the Private Secretary.

“ Gentlemen are reminded that all communications connected with the Lower Provinces should be made only to the Deputy Governor and not to the Governor General.

“ All communications having for their object the furtherance of the Public Service, are also to be made in the first instance in writing, and are to be addressed directly to the Governor General.

“ Gentlemen, however, will be pleased to abstain from addressing the Governor General personally in cases of an official character which should come before the Governor General in Council.

By Order,

II. M. DURAND, Capt. Engrs.

Private Secretary to the Governor General.”

This you will perhaps think excessively official, and it is so; or perhaps more official in its tone than gracious. There is one word which strikes me as being misplaced, that word “convenient”; replace it with “well,” and use it instead of “custom” in the next line, and the sentence will be improved, unless indeed his Lordship only meant his own custom. It must be inconvenient for a gentleman who has achieved Peace in Asia, and who, having “laboured in the Decemvirate,” like Appius Claudius wishes to “repose in the Decemvirate” to be bothered with business visits, whether of a public or private nature. But coun-

try gentlemen are not Governors-General, and therefore this Notification is only for the guidance of Metropolitan beggars and intruders. By the by, there was an error in my last letter which I beg to correct, but without taking any blame to myself as it went the round of all the papers,—further evidence of the licentiousness of the Press. It was imputed to a Mr. Mathews, who was called “the Prince of Indigo Planters,” that he had entertained Lord Ellenborough who was called the, — but no matter what, at Allahabad. Now I am credibly informed that this is not true; and that the Mr. Mathews in question was not at the Station, but that his house was let to the *burra sahib* for the consideration of Rs. 300 per mensem; so you will see the hob-a-nobbing had not commenced so early as was reported.

I spoke of his Lordship’s abolishment-vein. He has begun upon the Marine Board and it is understood he is going on. The fact is not officially announced but it is known. He may take a tilt at the Military Board, and if he does of course he will upset it; at the Salt Board, and if he does it will assuredly get pepper; the Medical Board must expect to be physicked, and the Board of Customs to meet with an ugly customer: indeed no Board is safe but the Board of Controul, which is only out of danger because it

is out of arm's length. There are some other Boards indeed he cannot touch, to wit, the Boards of the *Sans Souci*. Our theatre opened for the season last night with the play of *VIRGINIUS*, which, popular as it is, had not been performed here for more than twenty years.

While our Governor-General is settling down, our worthy Bishop is thinking of packing up, and, head traveller for the Church, is going to make a tour through the Upper Provinces. We see comparatively little of him at his See, for it is only the other day he returned from Western India; but it is said he has made up his mind to die in India, and whatever may tend to make him live long will be a benefit to this country, for with all his eccentricities he is an able and enthusiastic man.

Have I any thing else to say? Yes, a word or two more. Government has issued a most important notice, to the effect that it has recommended the Home Government to discontinue advances on the hypothecation of goods. Here again Lord Ellenborough deserves high praise, for this recommendation strikes at the root of a gigantic evil in this city,—over-speculation. The system has been to buy on credit, to raise funds on hypothecation, and to employ them in further speculation. It is to be hoped that no mercantile

influence at home will be able to stand effectually in the way of this most wholesome change. Having got back to mercantile matters I may mention that the late firm of Fergusson and Co. whose affairs were in the hands of Trustees, have gone into the Insolvent Court. This was decided upon as the preferable course at a large meeting of creditors. There were various difficulties in the way of the Trustees, not the least of which was the return to England of two of the partners, with the known intention of going through the Court there. The highest compliment was paid to the partners here for the assistance they had rendered the Trustees, and the estate goes into the hands of the Assignees with every account adjusted.

I intend to send this letter by the *Hindostan* Steamer which sails at day-light on the 10th. The Mail viâ Bombay leaves the afternoon of the same day; I anticipate that the despatches by the former will be considerably in advance in England unless they are unlucky in Egypt. The *Hindostan* takes away, I won't say exactly how many more than 100 passengers, and this reminds me to say a word or two on a subject which has lately been introduced to us, the abandonment of what we call the direct Overland route in favour of the Bombay line. It is said to be in contem-

plation (if not arranged) by the Peninsular and Oriental Company to run their large vessels between Bombay and Suez, and to have branch boats from Ceylon, Madras and Calcutta. · Let them try it by all means. They look to profit, and as they have looked one way let them look the other. I know not what advantageous mail arrangements they may make, but let them relieve themselves at once of all trouble about an inferior, or any vessels to carry passengers from Calcutta to Bombay:—they won't go. Before the Company shall long have abandoned Calcutta others will probably be found ready enough to take their place. Boats for rapid communication will not pay without Passengers, and Bombay cannot provide them. I believe their last steamer took about ten! Here, in August, when Mr. Nobody would not expect Mr. Anybody was likely to be on the wing, we are sending away more than ten times the number! Will this be worth a thought? Second thoughts though the best are sometimes too late.

Believe me,

My dear Mackenize,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, September 19th, 1843.

MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,

It is a year to-day since I wrote you last ; how long since I heard from you I shall not say : I confess my own neglect but will not hint it in any other quarter.

I could forgive you a great deal for having asked my opinion, and more for having followed it ; the one compliment is frequently paid, the other very rarely, unless indeed it accords with the feeling of the applicant which in this case it did not. You were disposed to come out to this country ; I advised you not to do so, and you have made up your mind to stay at home. May you be happy,—in other words may you have a good husband, half a dozen children and ample means to provide for a score : may you settle in your own beautiful county and occasionally visit the great human cattle-shows of Europe, only to return with a keener sense of enjoyment to your

own fire-side : may you be the beneficent Goddess of your neighbourhood, diffusing happiness around you to the humblest within your reach, courted by your equals, looked up to by your inferiors and loved by all. If when your lease of life be out you don't quit the world a happier woman than you would have been, had you come hither and married even our Governor-General, take me to task for my counsel whenever and wherever we may meet.

With this very pretty preface I proceed with my letter, and let me thus early request that if you do not desire to hear anything about political matters you will skip the next three or four pages. I expect to write so much on public affairs, and then propose a brief sketch of the unusual gaiety of the last month. We men are in the habit of taking it for granted that you women neither care to know, nor are capable of understanding the graver gossip of the day. I intend no such impertinence, but briefly notify the order of my news that you may take all or part as shall best please you.

But even were the rule as I have hinted, I feel confident all matters connected with China would be an exception. Ladies, old and young, have existing attachments or pleasant reminiscences con-

nected with the celestial Empire. China china, China tea, China crapes, China fans, China ginger, China jars, China puzzles, and China et ceteras, have more or less a hold upon them, creating a claim upon their attention to any and everything Chinese, which they cannot wholly resist. I am therefore satisfied that you will not turn coldly from China news. If Lord Ellenborough, in that authoritative style for which he is so famous, had said "let it be good" it could hardly have been better. But I forget; it will be no news that the treaty has been ratified, for that will have been heard in England before this leaves India, the document having been forwarded from Hong Kong to Suez by the *Akbar* steamer. Sir H. Pottin-ger's fame has been perfected by the admirable manner in which he has brought his Commercial labors to a close. It is said that the same passive resistance which was so long offered to him on the part of British merchants continued to the last, and he is less in favor with that body than ever, since he has declared that the British authorities shall give no countenance to Opium smuggling: they are enjoined to make known to the Chinese every case that comes to their knowledge of an attempt to evade the laws, and Sir Henry has emphatically said that if exigencies should require him to

go beyond the law in supporting the integrity of the Commercial compact, he will readily incur the responsibility, relying on the British Parliament for indemnity. That he should have felt it necessary to embody this in his proclamation is sufficient evidence of the determination of those employed in the traffic to persist in their profitable pursuit, and the consequences of collision, which it will be impossible to avoid, cannot be contemplated without dread. I hold that a Government has as much right to carry its punishments into execution as it has to make its own laws, and that no second Power is entitled to interfere with the one or the other. If they affix death as the penalty for introducing opium into their country, and Englishmen are convicted, it is certainly not for us to say the punishment is too severe. They might as well insist that we should not hang a man for writing another's name, or transport him for life for stealing a lamb. It makes no difference that the culprit is not of the country whose laws he defies: he is subject to them as though a native, and his offence is the greater if he violates them with premeditation. The awkward position in which England will stand is this, that while our authorities in China are cordially opposing the opium traffic, in India the Govern-

ment is producing the drug with a full knowledge of the market for which it is intended, and this is to a certain extent collusion. We have heard a great deal about the revenue obtained by the drug, and its sacrifice would be a serious affair, but those who dwell upon this do not appear to have set against it the advantages arising from our facilitated intercourse with China, and the great importance of allowing no good ground of complaint against us. This question should be looked at, not as one of right, but policy ; China cannot for a moment pretend that we are not at liberty to grow all the poisons in the vegetable world, but she may ask,—is it perfect faith to tell us not a cake of opium shall be stored in those ports we have thrown open to you, or in the Island we have ceded to the British Crown, and yet to produce it for the express purpose of being smuggled into our country? In how much higher a position should we stand if saying,—We as a government will have nothing to do with its production and we will not encourage its importation, but the immediate protection of your laws must be left to yourselves. Irrespective of the incalculable advantages promised us by the new treaty, it is the well considered opinion of many that Government would lose

nothing by this resolve that an export duty on the drug would not cover. The present state of the question will no doubt be much debated in England, and the result must eventually be, either that our Plenipotentiary's doings must be undone—an abandonment of the spirit of the treaty on our part—or the Government must cease to grow the poppy. I care not whether opium be directly mentioned in the treaty or not—there may have been many reasons why it was not,—but Sir Henry's proclamation must be taken as an exemplification of the understanding subsisting between the contracting parties, the same being that we should do nothing to facilitate the traffic. His prohibitory order against opium being stored can hardly long subsist, with our Government producing and all but shipping it for China. We are told that our merchants are to decline settling at Hong Kong—Victoria, I should rather say—because they may not do what they like with their own, that is, keep the drug on hand till they can find favourable opportunities of disposing of it. This is a ridiculous threat at which the Government may well laugh; on the contrary it would be no laughing matter for the legitimate speculator, and the revenue of the country, if this new

possession were made the convenient storehouse for a contraband trade. One word more about China. She is said to be preparing for war, rebuilding her fortifications, improving her gun-foundries, and replacing her small arms with those made more after the fashion of our own. All this may be true, but it is only the natural result of the lesson they have had, and not necessarily any indication of a design to break the peace ; at the same time it is to be expected that they will over-estimate the approach they are making to us Barbarians in the civilizing science of war, and desire to retrieve their disgraces. They are at present not at all sensible that had we exchanged all our appliances we should still have humbled to the dust the Sun and Moon of their celestial firmament.

All our news from Scinde is sickness, and that is no news at all. From day to day accounts vary in degree but all are disastrous.

Our Governor-General is still warlike, and in this line is apparently of more than opinion that nothing is done while ought remains to do, for I believe if there were nothing he would make it. Fortunately for the indulgence of his humour Bundelcund affords a field for a little martial exercise, and the unsettled state of the Punjaub

holds out excellent promise of extending it. The quarrel between the Maharajah and his Minister Dyan Sing is said to be more bitter than ever, notwithstanding the latter's having returned to Court and gone through the forms of reconciliation. To apply a very hackneyed figure to the Punjaub, *that* pear is ripening, and will assuredly fall into the ever open jaws of the Honorable Company: "the fruit that will fall without shaking" is never "too mellow" for John. A force of 17,000 men is to be in arms on the Jumna by the end of next month.

And now let me hang up politics and tell you a little of the gaiety of which I have spoken.

As Lord Ellenborough was on his way to the Presidency he was complimented with dinners and balls, the Military playing host on every occasion. On his arrival, although taking an early opportunity of stating that he intended to lead the quiet life of a country gentleman, he was greeted in a similar manner. I mentioned in my last that the Barrackpore affair had come off with great eclat and that Dum-Dum was in the field: that entertainment too was brilliant, as every thing is when left to the Redcoats, a proposition that will I know receive your hearty concurrence. After Dum-Dum had spoken, or rather lamped

its "WELCOME LE" in the more intelligible blaze of "Ellenborough," the Staff of Calcutta came forward to keep up the Ball and did it with glorious spirit.

The contagion having reached Calcutta, brought hither by ladies who had caught it at the neighbouring stations, some of them insisted that the Civil Society owed Lord Ellenborough a deep debt of gratitude, and as ladies are not to be argued with when peremptory, of course there were men who for the first time thought the same. Twelve hours' notice was given of a meeting at the Town Hall to consider what "mark of attention" should be paid to his Lordship, and at least forty persons assembled to settle the matter. All affairs of this kind are managed here in a way rather peculiar to the place: half a dozen, perhaps half that number, arrange every thing to their own satisfaction, and are good enough to make it known at the appointed time to those who are curious on the subject. On this occasion it would appear to have been decided that a committee should be appointed to confer with his Lordship and take their directions from him, at any rate the proceedings were opened with this proposition; but it appearing reasonable that those who were called

to consider the matter should dispose of it, this was very quickly negatived and the important discussion began. I have spoken of petticoat influence and I must treat it as undoubted, for when a gentleman proposed that the most suitable course would be an Address to his Lordship there was not a voice to second him, it was treated with silent contempt! In Calcutta it would never occur to people that an Address need not be crammed with eulogy; their experience is that it must be so: they could not conscientiously consent to praise, and they never dreamt of the opportunity being turned to gentle admonition. They were insensible to the occasion, but their sense of propriety prevailed. Not to trouble you with all that passed, eventually a Ball and Supper were decided upon as the fittest compliment Calcutta could pay to a Governor General. En-
viable man to be so appreciated! eloquent commentary on his twenty months of rule!

The *Eastern Star* has said, "It must be a source of great regret to the real admirers of Lord Ellenborough, (if in his public capacity he has any,) that the noisy nonsense of a dance, and the tawdry eloquence of after-supper speeches, should have been thought all he could claim from the capital of British India: a demonstration in which

the fiddlers of the town must necessarily play the most important part is not exactly the compliment most acceptable to a statesman." The same paper adds—"an Address would have been something from which his absent friends in India might have derived gratification, and what would it not have been worth at home ! It would have made a leader for every Tory journal in the country, and even Ministers from their high places might have noticed this public demonstration of confidence: but fancy the Duke, or Sir Robert hinting that the licentious Press of India must not be trusted touching the estimation in which the Governor-General's policy was held, for that he had been invited to a dance !" Yes, he has been invited to a dance, and on being waited upon by a deputation—not of ladies as it ought to have been—accepted the same, but he declined naming the day just then and promised to communicate with the Stewards when he had made up his mind. So this affair stands over. Happily for domestic quiet there were plenty of racketings of the same character coming on, and at present the ladies have hardly had time to give vent to their disappointment on the heads of those impolitic gentlemen, who did not see that if they gave a statesman a toy they should have done it with a little *address*.

The Military parties you will readily understand were quite a different affair; there was really no other way of Officers publicly expressing their satisfaction with the "Friend of the Army," as they might not allude to public matters. Yet you will not be slow to conclude the real state of the case,—an Address could not be ventured upon, it must have been a failure, and therefore the precedent of former occasions when a Governor-General has returned after a long absence was abandoned. The difficulty has not arisen out of the Afghanistan business, for Lord Auckland's policy divided the public, the strongest party, I believe, being decidedly against him—yet when he returned to Calcutta he was not refused an Address. The "mark of attention" that was paid to his sisters was the one tendered to his successor, and even that was singularly ill-deserved, for just what they did to unite society in one social circle, he has carefully avoided.

At the Military Ball his Lordship made a speech which has caused some discussion: it was an amplification of an opinion frequently expressed by him before, that "India was won by the sword and must be kept by the sword," a proposition that I don't intend to discuss here,

and one that it would be most impolitic to enforce on every occasion even if it were true, which it is not. He distinctly avowed that he came to India to make the Army his first care, and beyond question he has proved that little else has occupied his attention. He spoke in a somewhat mysterious way of making the Empire considerably more wonderful than he found it,—but he did not anticipate leaving it happier, nor I believe does anybody suppose he will. He was particularly emphatic in announcing his proper position to be at the right hand of the Commander-in-Chief, and coupling this and that together, it is as clear as anything can be, emanating from him, that his mind is not on (in its proper sense) the government of this country. Since the above entertainment Lord E. has given a Ball at his country residence, at which I believe Calcutta was represented by the Secretariat and the members of one mercantile House.

I do not pretend to notice all these sultry and saltatory gatherings in the order in which they were jumped, but simply to say a few words about each of them, as forming together a saltant and epulary epoch, from whence may be dated a new birth of pleasure (or its counterfeit,) after the long dominant dullness of “the Ditch.”

While on purely Military manifestations I may mention a *Ball* given by the Officers of H. M. 10th Regiment on the 7th inst., on which day Sir Hugh Gough presented the Corps with new colours, and delivered an excellent address. The (in my opinion) profane mockery customary on these occasions was gone through, and God was called on to bless the rallying points of strife and bloodshed as solemnly as if they had been the sacramental elements ; this, to men who were too far off to hear a syllable of what was said, and not as reasoning creatures very likely to be impressed with it if they had—but this is not *a-propos* to my theme, and I leave it.

The Calcutta people are never slow in hospitality and compliments where they are called for ; Sir Hugh and Lady Gough had scarcely landed when it was determined to give the Lady a Ball on a grand scale. It turned out perhaps one of the most successful things of the kind that has ever been attempted here. It was a Fancy Ball, and for a wonder those who indulged an innocent vanity were not, as generally the case with us, painfully singular. There were 600 people in the hall, and a very fair proportion of them very much disguised. The great success of the entertainment originated in a mistake. The *European* population is divided into two very

separate bodies,—minuter subdivisions I will not now notice, though it might not be unamusing—Society and the Community. The former is supposed to include all that are on the Government House list, the latter those who are not. The Ball to Lady G. was given to her on her arrival as taking first place in Society, and ought therefore to have been given by the “Society” only, but oblivious of this, it was thrown open to the “Community,” precisely as the entertainment was to Sir Hugh some few months ago in honour of our China victories. There can be no question that this was a breach of etiquette, but happily it was anything but disastrous in its results. Society separated itself from Community, but Community kicked up its heels with unbounded hilarity, and probably noted between whiles how the dresses they had made for the occasion became the wearers. It is rather strange that this should have been the regulation of a compliment to Lady Gough, and that “the mark of attention” to Lord Ellenborough should be restricted to the few, but such is the fact; the Community are not to be admitted when the latter event comes off. I wind off these balls by merely mentioning the last, an “At Home” of Lady Gough’s on the 11th, the evening before the family embarked *en route* to Cawnpore. You will

probably say the foregoing list is pretty well for, after all, a small society, with even the community thrown in. Moreover these festivities have trodden one upon another like people in the pit avenue of a theatre, all having taken place in eleven days. How the ladies stand this round of strength-dissipation in such a climate has never been satisfactorily explained. I venture to say potent as beer is it is not that, although the brilliant author of *Three Years In India* says that it is commonly taken at breakfast—which I beg you not to receive on his or any other authority. We expect a little amusement from the *Work*, which at present we know only from London extracts.

And now my dear Charlotte I anticipate you, and cry—enough. Milliners are making up their bills, and but for this there would be a lull in all our houses ; but they keep alive a strong recollection of the dazzling exhibitions of the past, and have a peculiar excitement of their own, which some day or other I dare say you will understand. God bless you, and give you fortitude in all things to have your own way, and ever

Believe me,

Yours in all affection,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, October 17th, 1843.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

It was only in my last letter I intimated that affairs were hastening to a crisis in the Punjaub. Since then, as you will have learned from the Bombay papers by the last Mail, the beginning of the end has commenced, and wholesale murder has been at work. Indeed while I was writing it was going on, for the Maharajah Shere Singh fell on the morning of the 15th Sept. The first report was that the conspiracy was arranged by Dhyan Singh his Minister, and Fakeer Azeezooden, while Ajeet Singh was selected to strike the blow. There is no evidence at present that Dhyan Singh had anything to do with it, and Azeezooden appears to have kept aloof. It is not perfectly clear even now how the Maharajah was slain, whether by Ajeet Singh or by the fire of a body of his soldiers, nor is it very material. Ajeet was the active

agent and well deserved the fate that so speedily overtook him. That Dhyan Singh lost his life, however he may be pitied supposing him innocent, was perhaps a fortunate thing for his country since it must inevitably hasten the hour in which it is to be reduced from anarchy to order. With the co-operation of Goolab Singh his elder brother, the most powerful Chief in the Punjaub, a semblance of authority might have been for some time preserved, but permanent tranquillity would have been hopeless with between one and two hundred thousand men in arms, without any head, or under leaders perpetually plotting against each other, probably without any definite aim, or other hope than the spoils of disorganization. Heera Singh revenged his father's death by storming the fort and putting the murderer Ajeet, and Lena Singh, Sindhawallah, to the sword. Only yesterday we learned that Heera Singh had fallen before Lena Singh, Mhajeeteah, and that Goolab Singh was advancing on Lahore with an army of 25,000 men. Who is now on the guddee we know not, it being said that a child, Dhuleep Singh, called an adopted son of Rundjeet's, and who was proclaimed Maharajah by Heera Singh has disappeared. He is probably dead. I would refer you to some highly

interesting notices in the *Calcutta Overland Star*, of the great men of the Lahore Court, now swept from the busy scene in which they were playing their dangerous parts. They are written by a gentleman who was personally acquainted with the parties. The question here is not what will our Government do, but when will they act ? and that, though to-day does not decide to-morrow may. Upon any just ground of interference we shall cross the Sutlej, and from that moment the Punjaub will be virtually our's. I believe a year ago Lord Ellenborough would not have waited for provocation, but he is somewhat less wild than he was. An army of nearly 30,000 men is to be posted on the Sutlej in readiness to move, and this with the Army of Exercise on the Jumna will give us probably 50,000 men in the field. I think our military news, then, is likely to be interesting for the next few months at any rate.

Lord Ellenborough remains among us : it was thought that the events to which I have referred would have hurried him to the Upper Provinces, but he has made no sign. The past month has been unusually barren of intelligence, the Punjaub being all we have had to talk of ; Gwalior continues as before, threatening ; sickness reigns

in Scinde ; from China we have nothing, and locally we are almost without a syllable worth postage. We have some promise of the establishment of an Inland Steam Navigation Company on a grand scale, under the countenance, as I hear, of Messrs. Baring, Brothers, and an intelligent engineer lately arrived from England has proceeded up the rivers with the view of forming some opinion of the difficulties to be contended against. Should this undertaking be successfully carried out it will be of incalculable importance to this country.

Mr. G. W. Johnson's " Stranger in India, or Three Years in Calcutta " has reached us since I wrote last. It is as well you should understand at home what we think of it. Mr. Colburn never published 500 pages of such trash : it is the veriest literary (?) drivel that was ever put into print. Mr. Johnson was the Editor of the *Englishman*, to which appointment he specially came out. After a few months daily exhibition of incompetence, he made a mistake in transferring an article from (I think) the *London Spectator* to his own paper, without marking it with inverted commas, or making other acknowledgment. Of course he was not long in his Chair. He subsequently became Editor of the *Courier*,

an evening journal which expired under his hands, and the only other appointment he filled—which he did not long keep—was Law Lecturer at the Hindoo College. His book is full of stupid blundering, unfounded attacks and wilful exaggerations: men and things are alike misrepresented, while the twaddling style of the whole would weary any old woman in Christendom. The *Englishman* having imported this genius has felt it just as well to let his volumes pass unnoticed, but the other morning papers have not allowed it to escape. It really is too bad that a man who was rather pitied while he was here, and towards whom much forbearance was shown in consideration of his feebleness, should return home and attempt to turn a penny by scandalizing Society and the Services. If any one who had even been a month in Calcutta had shown the “Stranger” up, however gently, Mr. Colburn would probably have sold about as many copies as would have paid for the cloth covers of half the impression. But at home it was not I suppose thought worth the trouble. It has been done here that people might have the chance of seeing, since Mr. Johnson told them what the ex-WE thought of Calcutta, what Calcutta WEÉS think of Mr. Johnson. Enough of him.

I have more than once written on the subject of Cooly emigration, and it is a matter which has to be legislated upon in a wiser spirit than has yet been evinced. I do not allude to principle, for upon that the Government has gone broadly right, but to the carrying out of the measure—the principle in operation. The system is beyond question defective and must be mended. Some of my former letters have gone fully into the expense and, to say the least, the inconvenience of many agents between the labourer in his own country and the planter in Mauritius. I shall not recur to those arguments now, but I must touch on the subject because there has lately been a charge before the Police of wholesale kidnapping. That it is substantially false, I have very little doubt, yet some of the grievances complained of might be true, which under a better system would not be possible. I do not believe that any emigrants who are shipped, are shipped against their will; though a large party of them have asserted this, and that they were beaten and nearly starved: against the probability of the truth of which fact is another,—that they are far too valuable to be treated other than well. Since the present Act came into operation ten months ago, nearly 12,000 coolies have

left Calcutta ; and as the story lately told to the authorities by some forty out of two hundred and twenty-three who left a vessel in the River is the first of the kind, it is not to be credited without some corroborative evidence : the whole is open to suspicion since much of it is obviously false. But still the system is a bad one, because the only check upon deception practised on the intending emigrants, simply prevents the possibility of their being actually shipped without their own avowed consent ;—that check is the Superintendent's office, where they are questioned and registered. But they are brought away from their houses, from all parts of the country, by inferior agents supplied with a pass for those they may collect, signed by an official to prevent detention at the different police stations, but which it is very possible may be abused. These men scour far and wide, and on them the coolies are dependent for subsistence during their progress to Calcutta. Whether they leave their homes readily, or under what false representations they may be induced to do so, it is impossible to tell. Under what threats or bribes they answer the few queries put to them at the Agent's office nobody but their keepers know ; that they may think, once separated from their families by fraud, they can-

not help themselves, and must needs go on, is not impossible, but that they are forcibly and against their will carried on board is a glaring lie, which renders it difficult to know how much of their statements to believe. Nothing could be more perfect than the system for their protection from the moment they come before the authorities : it ensures their being better cared for than ever they were in their lives before, for independent of an officer visiting every ship here before she leaves the river, to see that the room, light, and ventilation are what they should be, and that the food and water are what the Act prescribes with reference to their numbers, another official visits them on arrival to ascertain that no regulation has been infringed ; and it is due to the commanders and officers who have been engaged in the transportation of these emigrants to say, that there has never been a complaint made at Mauritius of ill-usage of any description. One of two systems must be eventually introduced, if every step in Cooly emigration is to be above suspicion. Either the Planters must appoint one common agent, who shall be assisted in obtaining labourers by the Government making known through its officers in the Mofussil the advantages of emigration, or the

Government must take the supply into its own hands, and the latter I believe would be the preferable course—but I am satisfied either would serve the people, the planters, and save much of the premium paid by the Government of Mauritius. Yet, to write fairly, there are difficulties attending either of these suggested improvements. It is possible that were the Government to take any prominent part in holding out inducement to emigration, on the strength of this many more thousands would flock to Calcutta than there would be demand for: on occasions of famine or even unusual distress this would almost inevitably be the case, and though unquestionably it is the duty of the authorities to feed the starving wherever they may be found, there should be no encouragement to their gathering together on occasions of general suffering. I believe 50,000 coolies would satisfy the wants of Mauritius planters, and that number once sent, the annual supply needed would not probably be more than 4000 or 5000. If Government were to say to the agents here, —There are 20,000 Coolies in Calcutta, will you take them over, since they came here to proceed to Mauritius? the reply must inevitably be —No, we do not want a quarter of the number.

To this it may be answered, the Government may assist the one agent system, or become principals themselves, and apply checks that should prevent the danger suggested. It is really a very difficult question on which to decide what it were best to do : in the mean time, while considering it, it is satisfactory to know that in a very brief period Mauritius has been greatly served, and some thousands from this country have been raised from want to comparative independence.

The *Hindostan* Steamer arrived at Diamond Harbour yesterday evening, and was at her moorings in Garden Reach this morning about 11 o'clock. She brings I am told (or has had on her voyage) about 90 passengers, and the Falmouth Sept. Mail. That *viâ* Marseilles she left for the *Victoria* ; it was marked generally "Indian Mail," instead of being assorted for the different Presidencies, which by the by ought always to be done, and would cause neither much trouble nor much, if any, additional expense. The loss of the *Memnon* with the July Mail, and the return to Bombay of the *Victoria* with that of August, causing a further delay of 10 or 12 days, will necessarily have caused great commercial inconvenience, indeed it will be well if it end there.

The throwing over of the Scinde business until another Session is just what I expected : should Ministers chance to go out before it comes on, they will leave to their successors as unacceptable a legacy as they took from the Whigs, touching the affairs of Afghanistan : whatever the expediency may have been the aggression was unjust, and though the Whigs would not be answerable for that, they would have a new country on their hands which will be much more expense than profit for some years, and which is not too readily to be taken as settled because it is at present quiet.

I have had a letter from a friend by this Mail, which mentions the revived rumour that Lord E. is to return, and Sir T. Graham take his place. May the vacancy occur ! We shall be content to take our chance of a successor. I might scribble a little more, although I said there was nothing to write about, but I have some London papers, magazines, &c. just delivered, and I cannot resist them ; therefore, trusting to send a better budget next month,

I am, my dear Alfred,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, November 19th, 1843.

MY DEAR ALFRED.

Before giving you the news of the month I may allude to an item in my last letter. The report of Heera Singh's death at the hands of Lena Singh, Mhajeeteah, and of the disappearance of Dhuleep Singh, the boy Maharajah, turns out to be incorrect. They are alive and well, as we are at present informed, and things have assumed an appearance of quiet hardly to have been looked for. Goolab Singh has not yet made his appearance at Lahore, but it is understood that he has acknowledged the young Maharajah and is ready to support his nephew Heera Singh, the Minister. Disturbances in the neighbourhood of Jumroo are the cause assigned for his not having moved. That peace should reign long is amongst the most improbable of events; still I may say, peace is the news of the hour from the Punjaub.

We received intelligence a short time back that Dost Mahommed had been shot while reviewing his troops in the neighbourhood of Cabul, but it has not been confirmed, and the general impression is that it is untrue. Without there being actual war in Afghanistan things are as unsettled as in the Punjab. It is said that the Dost and his son Akbar are not on the best terms, in consequence of the former having, as the latter supposes, made overtures to our Government. There is a powerful party opposed to the Dost, and owing to the Loghur and Ghilzie tribes having refused to remit any revenue, he has been unable to pay the regular troops he was organising, and is left with a force not more than 3,000 strong. There is talk of an invasion of the Afghan territory from Bokhara, and of an attack upon Peshawur by the Afghans. Rumours reach us every day, and we have small means of knowing their truth. From Gwalior the news tends rather towards peace. Dadah Khasgee, the obnoxious minister, has fallen from his high estate, and it is said the ultimatum of the Government has been assented to—what it is we know not exactly, but it comprises the cession of Chundéree and certain minor Jaghires, to be interchanged against territory now held

by the British power. Hurree Holkar who ascended the throne of the Mahrattas in 1834, was gathered to his fathers last month, and is succeeded by an adopted son, a boy of about eight years of age.

From Scinde the news of the ill-health of our troops is most distressing, nor is it confined to one locality; from all quarters it is the same, perhaps from Sukkur worse than any other place. I had a letter from thence the other day of the 29th ultimo, the latest news we have, which mentions that out of the whole Brigade there were only about 150 men fit for service, or who in fact could turn out at all!

From China we have had no political news since I wrote last, but the latest arrival mentions the death of the Hon. J. R. Morrison, who was principal interpreter to our Force during the war, and had recently been appointed to the Hong-Kong Council. The *Friend of India* has published a communication of this serious loss by a friend at our new settlement, from which I borrow the following extract:—

“When we look at the present crisis of our improved intercourse with China, and see that, in Mr. Morrison, we have lost one, compared with whom none was so well acquainted with the

policy of the Chinese Government,—so familiar with the peculiar forms, etiquette, and intricacies of diplomatic correspondence with the Imperial Cabinet—so thoroughly and so accurately versed in the geography, manners, and languages (especially that used in official correspondence) of the country,—so sound in his views of and suggestions for the prudent management of this people,—so high in the esteem and confidence of the two Governments, now standing upon an equal footing, the Chinese and the British—we cannot for a moment question the justice of the view which H. M. Plenipotentiary has taken of the event, when he says, “In a public point of view, Sir Henry Pottinger considers the death of Mr. Morrison to be an irreparable national calamity, and he doubts not but as such it will be received and viewed by his sovereign and country.”

He was seized with fever on the 20th August, removed for change on the 25th to Macao, and died there on the 29th. Sir Henry Pottinger was among the chief mourners at his funeral.

I mentioned last month that Lord Ellenborough had made no sign of leaving Calcutta, albeit there were such temptations for one of his turn in the military movements that were going on. It was

shortly after announced by the Gazette that it was expedient his Lordship should visit the N. W. Provinces and other parts of India, and part of the expediency was that he should be "unaccompanied by any Member of the Council of India." After the arrival of the news from Gwalior to which I have alluded, it was said his Lordship was not going to move, that the idea of doing so was not his, and that he was very glad to be able to remain in Calcutta. Now the understanding is, that he leaves this *en route* for Agra on the 25th instant, the expediency of his going alone remains of course precisely as it was before; and it *is* expedient, for as he will have his own way in every thing, it is just as well his Council should be left to do what they can without him in matters beneath his interference. I may mention that the ball and supper which was voted to him (I mentioned it in my August letter) has never come off, and never will. He saw the sort of compliment it was when an Address was refused him, as proved by his accepting it without naming a day, and subsequently declining to name one. When he comes back those who desire to feast and flatter him had better not wait a couple of months without tendering a compliment, and when they do so they may as well exalt its character a little, for,

doing so, failure even in their attempt would be less offensive to the object of their laudation, than fifty sets of quadrilles with a liberal supply of cold fowls and ham, offered as his full deserts.

The subject of Cooly emigration has been a good deal discussed during the last few weeks. I said last month that it would have to be legislated upon in a wiser spirit than had yet been evinced. Already we have had an Act passed, without the usual readings, conceived in a spirit repugnant as it appears to me to justice and humanity. I will allude further to it presently, but I desire in the first place to mention that the case spoken of in my last, in which wholesale kidnapping was charged, has turned out, as I foretold it would, to be utterly false. The *Hurkaru* which gave currency to the statements told at the Police Office, in the shape of, I have no doubt, a very correct report, has admitted that it believes them to be a parcel of lies. It is as well that this should be known, because Mr. George Thompson has addressed a long letter to the Editor of the *Delhi Gazette*, in which he states that he sent the *Hurkaru* home last month with all the dreadful details, and intends to rouse Great Britain from end to end to prepare petitions to Parliament on the subject of this

most horrible slavery. Mr. George Thompson, you will remember, has been for the last few months mastering the grievances of the King of Delhi, whose advocate he has become, and he has seemed desirous, being about to return to England, not to have it supposed that he has lost any of his enthusiasm about the wrongs of British India. He has therefore fixed on Cooly emigration as a good talkable subject—in which his peculiar powers may be advantageously brought out—and he no doubt intends to stir men's blood in divers Tavern-halls. How much Mr. T. may know of the system that has prevailed under sanction of our Act founded on the Order in Council of 15th January, 1842, it is impossible to say, but if I may guess, I should guess,—nothing, or he never would have swallowed so greedily the extravagant falsehoods of a few skulking rascals, who jumped overboard swearing they were ill-used that they might offer themselves at the Emigration office again, and get a second bonus. If I write strongly on this subject you will understand I do so upon sufficient grounds. I have procured the testimony of most respectable men on board the ship, the pilot in charge and the preventive officer—both by the Act Cooly protectors—and it affirms the

report published by the *Hurkaru*—and sent home by Mr. Thompson to be FALSE. The men were not forcibly shipped, they were not confined, they were not under-fed, they were not beaten, they were not sick; the story of disease, and fever, and many deaths is a fiction; there was a medical man on board, and when the vessel was left at sea there were only five persons out of more than 200 triflingly indisposed, and only one had died. This case I again refer to, because it has awakened Mr. George Thompson's apparently slumbering humanity, and has brought him out in his old character. I may mention that while he was in Calcutta he was specially invited, if he desired to see the working of the system, to visit the Emigration office: then he could not find time; but as agent to the Landholders' Society and Counsel for the King of Delhi, we shall probably find him giving days to declamation on the subject.

I have before pointed out the amendments to be desired in the system, and it is because I would see them calmly considered that I deprecate the slangwhangery which has been indulged in: it is hardly necessary at this moment to say more, but I may perhaps advantageously add, that no single case of cruelty, or oppression, or

wrong of any kind to an emigrant has ever been proved since the Act ~~came~~ into operation. I mean of course after he has tendered himself as an emigrant.

This speaks for itself: let Mr. George Thompson handle it as he best may. But now for the Act, and as it is extremely brief, I will quote it verbatim:—

Fort William, Home Department, Legislative, 11th Nov.—The following Act passed by the Right Hon'ble the Governor General of India in Council, on the 11th November 1843, is hereby promulgated for general information :

ACT No. XXI of 1843.

An Act for regulating the Emigration of Labourers from India to Mauritius.

I. Whereas it has been represented that the demands of the Island of Mauritius for Agricultural labor will by the end of this year be greatly diminished, and it is desirable that effectual measures should be adopted for providing a larger proportion of Female Emigrants to that Island than has been procured under the present system of Emigration, it is therefore enacted, that from and after the first day of January next ensu-

ing Emigration to Mauritius shall only lawfully take place under the provisions of the Act No. 15 of 1842 from the Port of Calcutta.

II. And it is hereby enacted, that it shall be competent to the Governor General in Council to nominate a proper person to act as Protector of Emigrants at Calcutta, and that no Emigrant shall be permitted to embark without a Certificate from the Agent appointed by the Government of Mauritius, countersigned by the Protector, to the effect that such person has been engaged by him as an Emigrant to that Island on the part of the said Government.

T. R. DAVIDSON,
Offg. Secy. Govt of India.

I now subjoin an article on this Act from the *Calcutta Star* which gives entirely my view of this subject: it is one that must necessarily be debated at home, because it involves a principle which I believe cannot be invaded in these days without calling forth champions.

“It is impossible that the question of emigration from this country should be disposed of by the Act, the draft of which has already been published. It involves a question of much greater importance than the interests of Mauritius or even the protection of any given number of men,

women and children. We are a little surprised to hear people treating with ridicule the idea of the liberty of the subject being in issue; and we can only suppose that it is not the fact they deny, but the right. That their views should be regarded as intelligible it is necessary to suppose they advocate the doctrine that there is no liberty but that which the law gives, instead of all being liberty which the law does not take away—two propositions differing exactly as freedom and tyranny. All that the law can rightfully curtail of the liberty of man to go where he pleases and do what he pleases is comprised in this,—what to do and whither to go would be injurious to the common good. Laws that are generally restrictive under the sole plea of being protective of persons are unjust, and once to recognize the right to make them is to acknowledge absolute power. No one, we suppose, imagines that the Slave trade was abolished simply because cruelty was one of its features, and because it was necessary to protect slaves. The mass of evidence went to show that the slaves of the West Indies were a great deal better-off than the nominal free men who formed the agricultural population of England, and immeasurably before the population of large manufacturing towns in all the comforts

of life, and, no small evidence in the case, in moral conduct. But slavery was abolished because it was repugnant to humanity and to civilization that man should have absolutely property in man, lowering a fellow-creature from the dignity that God gave him to the beast of the field over whom he has dominion. Politically, too, it was felt that the abolishment of hereditary slavery—born serfdom—would benefit mankind, and that traffic in forced labour was the gain of a few at the expense of the many.

“To say then that the natives of a country shall not be permitted to leave its shores but under Government sanction, because whither they would go they are not wanted, because perchance they might not better their condition, or because even they might be liable to ill-treatment is a mockery of protection ; it is establishing a slavery of the most hateful character and cloaking it most hypocritically. For our part we see no difference whatever, as far as slavery is concerned, whether a man is forcibly taken from his country or forcibly compelled to remain in it—the question of actual cruelty may arise, and which is the greater must always depend upon circumstances : it can neither be charged generally on the one or the other. There may be much less cruelty in ship-

ping Coolies against their will to Mauritius, from whence they shall return sleek, fat and wealthy, than in forbidding them to go and keeping them at home poor, emaciated and penniless. As forcible shipment is a violation of man's natural liberty so is forced detention; the slavery is the same in both cases.

“ The contemplated Act, short as it is, appears as objectionable as perverse ingenuity could have made it; for reciting certain matters which are to be supposed to render this legislation necessary, it proceeds to enact very much more than is essential to the attainment of the objects in view. Thus we are told that the demands of the Island of Mauritius for agricultural labour will by the end of this year be greatly diminished—the object here being to reduce the supply—and that it is desirable that effectual measures should be adopted for providing a larger proportion of female emigrants—the object here being a most exemplary one. Now let us see by what means these are to be achieved? Not simply by restricting male emigration within limits, and making female emigration bear a fit and natural proportion, but by the declaring that *no native of this country shall proceed to Mauritius unless employed here as the servant of the Government there!*

Not, unjust as it would then have been, that only so many emigrants shall be allowed to go, from time to time, as the exigencies of the Island may require—but that go when they may—that is when they are permitted—they shall go as the servants of the Government! If this be not slavery in form, whatever it might turn out in practice, we know not the meaning of the term.

“ But on the subject of emigration there should be no legislation except to assist and protect, and that protection should be by the enforcement of laws in punishment of wrong done—not the protection which would say to a shivering wretch—You shall not warm your hands lest your clothes catch fire! The humanity of a Government that compels its wretched subjects to remain at home to starve when they desire to make the experiment of bettering themselves abroad, is even more questionable than that exercised the other day on board the *Harriet Scott*, when wounded men were shot to put them out of their misery. Between the Government taking emigration into its own hands, and registering every emigrant as its own servant, the difference is so wide that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. By the former we understand simply that, finding the whole means of emigration, it shall have the sole disposal of

those means. To say that having landed the people they shall not be free labourers in the fullest sense of the word—is to say, we purchase a right with our money which we will not concede to other speculators: what would be unjust in others is justice in us. We do not know that the Act is intended to employ any other control over emigrants than Government may constitutionally exercise over all, within its jurisdiction—we only know the enactment is very unfortunately worded. What appears to us the course for Government to have pursued, would have been to leave the supply to be regulated by the demand, to have left that to the agricultural interests of the Island, and to have contented themselves with seeing that emigrants could not be coerced here or ill used there. There is in the case of Coolies proceeding to Mauritius, we were almost going to say no possibility of such an influx of labour as should bring misery on emigrants or embarrassment upon the Island, for when the supply threatened to be sufficient, had Government stopped its premium only who would have sent for labour for which they could not afford to pay? and we apprehend, no one entertains the belief that Coolies here could afford to find their own outfit, small as it is, and ship themselves. Who but the Planters

could have an interest in inducing them to emigrate, and which of *them* would incur the risk of buying labour they could not employ? One word more. It may be said that it might be thought a good speculation to overstock the market with a view to the general reduction of a very high rate of wages; we regard this as chimerical, but supposing it not so, the Government might have fixed a minimum of wages for its own as well as the labourers' protection, and held masters bound to find passages home for those whom they had invited to emigrate and were unwilling longer to employ, however brief the period they had retained their services."

To the above may be added that this last Act is as bungling a piece of legislation as was ever perpetrated, independent of the slavery it establishes by declaring that no native of this country shall proceed to Mauritius unless he bind himself here to do so in the service of the Government! This new Act does not repeal No. 15 of 1842, on the contrary, it enacts that emigration shall cease from the other ports, and only lawfully take place here under the provisions of that Act. Now it would hardly be credited that the provisions of the Act passed the other day, are utterly repugnant to the Order in Council, to which

that no emigrant shall be permitted to embark without a certificate from the Agent, countersigned by the Protector, to the effect that such person has been engaged by him as an emigrant to that Island on the part of the said Government; and what 'says the Schedule, (appended to the Order in Council) of Rules and Regulations to be observed at Mauritius in regard to emigrants from British India, resorting to and arriving at that Island? Among other things it is declared that no contract made by an emigrant before he has been *on shore at Mauritius* for 48 hours shall be binding; that he shall not be capable of entering into any contract for service except for the period, in the manner, and under the superintendence which by a law in force there, is required in the case of contracts for service made by other Labourers in Agriculture or Manufactures within the Island. Our new Act declares that unless a man enters into an engagement in Calcutta he shall not be allowed to emigrate at all! The Order in Council contemplated the Government of India legislating on this subject, and providing Rules and Regulations for emigration, but it expressly states that such Rules and Regulations are not to be "*repugnant* to any thing in these Re-

gulations (its own) contained." This strikes me then as very repugnant, and it is not the only instance. By the new Act, as it comes into operation simultaneously with the stoppage of premium, all private shipments of Coolies must cease : who then is to pay the expense of bringing the emigrant from his native village, of keeping him in Calcutta, and paying his passage, &c. &c. ? The Agent ? Of course ; but it will be doing exactly what Her Majesty in Council has said shall not be done ! She has declared that no money shall be paid by the Colonial Treasurer until the emigrant is landed in the Island. These things would appear to have been entirely overlooked, and it may be safely said that if that Order in Council is of any effect, and meant anything when it said the Indian Government should not make any regulations repugnant to its provisions, the Government of Mauritius cannot become what I may call the Sirdar Duffadar of the Island.

We had papers the other day from Penang giving us an account of a bloody affair on board the ship *Harriet Scott* carrying convicts from that place to Bombay. The villains instead of being properly secured below and allowed air and exercise on deck a few at a time, were all stowed (some fifteen or sixteen) in the long boat. They rose on

the Captain during a squall in which all hands were employed, and the poor man was speedily murdered. The chief officer retreated to the cabin and kept up a fire upon them killing and wounding several: they then took to the boat, left the ship, were subsequently picked up, something of their history was suspected, and they were happily secured. Perhaps the most shocking part of the affair is, that after the villains had quitted the ship, the chief officer in a phrensy dragged from the boat a Chinaman and a Bengallee who had taken no part in the rising and shot them, and the account tells us that three of the wounded felons were shot to put them out of their misery! Within the last four years I think there have been fully as many cases of a like character, and the wickedness of sending ruffians of this sort on board-ship without any guard has been dwelt upon, but Government can spend millions in war, and not afford the expense of carrying the law into operation without endangering the lives of innocent people. These villains are said to have been Malay pirates, a nice gang truly to accommodate on a ship's deck, and no guard over them!

Since I began this letter we have had arrivals from China. They confirm the reports we have

had of the extreme sickness, from fever, that has been prevalent at Hong-Kong. The list of deaths, civil, military and commercial is heavy for one arrival. Howqua the senior Hong merchant, died at Canton on the 4th Sept. aged 75, leaving behind him it is said upwards of 25 millions of dollars. Commissioner Lin also has bade the world good night.* The French Consul, Court de Ratti Menton, has been received in state by the Viceroy of Canton; the preliminary arrangements and the interview were conducted with a marked desire to give eclat to the ceremony, and every thing went off most satisfactorily. France and America owe England not a little, and prudently are not slumbering on the opportunities they have of acquiring *pari passu* with us, a position in the Chinese Empire. I foretell that here will be sown the seeds of a future war.

The Rev. Mr. Gutzlaff succeeds Mr. Morrison as Chinese Secretary to H. Majesty's Superintendent of Trade and to the Government of Hong Kong. Mr. G. is at present at Chusan. Commercial accounts from Victoria are very unfavourable. The *Friend of China* of Sept. 24, says—"The only trade of any importance is contraband, so far as the Chinese are concerned. What

British manufactures have of late been sold, have not realized Canton rates, and the whole aspect of commercial affairs is desperately gloomy." Opium however is up at an enormous price, being quoted at Spanish Dollars 900 for Patna, and Dollars 760 for Malwah, and consequently it is expected here that in spite of the heavy quantity of 6000 chests to be put up at the first Government sale of the season (in January,) prices will range about Rs. 1,400 per chest. But I must quit China, as I have half a dozen other matters about which I desire to say a few words.

The last Mail informed us that you were mooting at home the question of the life or death of the Bokhara prisoners, Stoddart and Conolly, and that more than one volunteer had come forward ready to make a journey thither to ascertain the fact. You will doubtless remember that when writing to you on this subject last April I said, the probabilities were rather in favour of their being alive, and detained in hope of ransom. This was the opinion entertained by an Asiatic, Syed Keramut Ali, a Persianised Hindostanee who had fallen in with Conolly, travelled with him and accompanied him to Khyva: he spoke on an intimate knowledge of the Oosbek character. The subject has been a good deal

canvassed here since it was taken up at home, and the *Bombay Times* has published a statement made by a Jew of the name of Michael Barenstein, who states that he saw the two officers executed with two Jews and a young Russian officer. The *Calcutta Star* has pointed out the improbabilities on the face of the man's story, and has, I think I may say, identified him with a Polish Jew who bore the name of Mordecai, and was found at the court of Lahore when Lord Auckland was there, a man who spoke many languages and who it was tolerably certain was a Russian spy. He was induced to accompany the Governor-General's suite to Simla and remained there six months. It is asserted by the *Delhi Gazette* that it is impossible that this man can have been in Bokhara within the last four years. The *Calcutta Star* has intimated to the public that there is now in Calcutta an Afghan, a native of Candahar, by name Abdool Nubbee, a man who has been in Government employ under Major Leech in Beloochistan and Candahar, and who is willing to proceed forthwith to Bokhara, and bring back satisfactory proof either that these unfortunate officers have been sacrificed or are yet in captivity. His terms, which I have had from himself, are reasonable, Rs. 5000 on his return with such evidence as

shall be deemed conclusive, and Rs. 10,000 to his family if he should lose his life. Here is an offer infinitely preferable to any that has been, or can be made at home, and no doubt it will be closed with ; indeed I believe if we could have been certain that the British Government would take active measures to rescue these officers, if proved to be alive, the money would have been already in hand.

I noticed last month that a gentleman then lately arrived from England, with the view to the formation of an Inland Steam Navigation Company on a grand scale, had proceeded up the Ganges on a survey. I have heard the results of his experience as far as it has gone. He was delighted with the river as a field for Steam navigation ; he considers the difficulties to have been very greatly exaggerated, indeed that there are none for a boat properly constructed and well managed. It was doubted whether the bends of the Baugeretty would allow the navigation of a boat of 300 feet in length, the scale upon which his drawings were made ; he thinks that one of 600 even might be handled with ease if her engines were detached. From Allahabad he returns *viâ* the Soonderbunds, and his report on those waters is looked for with much interest. If

it be favorable I earnestly hope we may ere very long, see steamers on our magnificent rivers, in character with the power that sways this empire.

I gave you my opinion about Mr. Johnson's Book, *The Stranger In India* ; my motive was that you might not think we were quite the idiots his book might lead any other stranger to suppose. I would with the same view say a few words on the character of the London correspondence that is supplied to the *Englishman* newspaper, which was once the leading Journal in Bengal. I don't speak of circulation merely, but influence. It is, if possible, worse than any thing Mr. Johnson ever wrote when he was its editor, or since. For to dullness insufferable is added vulgarity most offensive. This has been the character bestowed upon it by journals that must be above all suspicion of petty jealousy, journals of the other Presidencies. The *Bombay Times*, *Bombay Courier* and *Madras Spectator* have felt that the character of the Indian Press should be protected from the consequence of such contributions passing unexposed. They have handled them most severely, but not more so than the occasion called for

The *Bombay Times*, too, has noticed with cutting severity the letter written by the pro-

prietor of ~~the~~ *Englishman* to Sir Jeremiah Bryant, stating that his charges against certain writers of the Indian Press having blamed the Army for atrocities never committed were "perfectly correct," but that they did not apply to the *Englishman*! The *Times* says Captain Macnaghten is a wilful slanderer; you may judge for yourself when I assure you that it was the *Englishman* which published the story about our troops roasting the Afghans, and, as the *Bombay Times* says, "gave its own special guarantee for the accuracy of the statement."

While on the subject of the Army I may mention that the *Calcutta Star* has advertised, that with the commencement of the new year it will begin the publication of a series of most valuable papers embodying the history of the Bengal Army, prepared with great labour and research by an Officer of high talent in this Service. The Work is to contain a general sketch of the whole Service, entering very fully into its earlier history, of which but little is generally known, and it will also combine a record of the Services of the several Corps composing the Army. This work is to be protected by copyright.

And now a few words upon matters purely local. The cold weather has set in, the thermo-

meter a shade perhaps under Summer Heat at home. Still, it is our cold weather and the Natives I dare say feel it wintry. They write funny notes, these natives, when they express themselves in English, and a good selection would be better than any comic annual. Here is one, verbatim, I had the other morning from a syce.

“ Worthy Sir,

“ I want one old pantaloons for make cover my body, in want of which I suffer too much cold.”

The morning gatherings at the Race Course are good—the promise of sport I believe fair—the Re-unions have commenced—parties are multiplying—the Course throngifying—and the whole city is in a dust, the Conservancy having become bankrupt and not a pice to spare for watering the roads. The Theatre—but there is a melancholy story to be told. On the 2nd of this month, Mr. James Vining made his first appearance in *Shylock*. The House was very full, and the performance of the Jew gave general satisfaction. The afterpiece was *The Handsome Husband*, in which Mr. Vining played his original part. Mrs. Leach was playing Mrs. *Windham*, and with as much nature and spirit as I ever saw her throw into any character. Waiting for her cue at the right upper en-

trance her dress caught fire from an oil lamp, one of a row placed on the floor, and in an instant she was in a blaze. For a moment she strove to extinguish it, but it was hopeless, and she rushed on the stage calling for help just as the House, alarmed by the light, had risen in the greatest excitement under the belief that the building was on fire. Assistance was promptly afforded, she was instantly thrown down and the flames extinguished, but not before she was severely burnt in both hands, arms, and shoulders. Of course the curtain fell instantly, and the unfortunate lady was carried to her dressing room, and thence to her house immediately adjoining the Theatre. She appeared to rally once or twice during her sufferings, but sunk at 1 A. M. yesterday morning. The impression on her mind was from the first that she should not survive the injuries she had received. She was in her 35th year, twenty of which she had been known to the theatrical world of Calcutta, and always as prime favourite, having been without a rival until recent days. As an actress, purely self-taught—for until four or five years ago when she went to England for a few months she had never seen any boards other than those on which she played, or any performers other than those who from time to

time formed the amateur company—she was excellent, considering the great range of characters she necessarily had to perform. Lofty tragedy was beyond her reach, but in serious parts, requiring pathos and tenderness rather than the development of the more violent passions, she was far above the average talent of the best Stage, and I have understood from competent judges that she was a better actress before she had seen the best in London than she was afterwards. In genteel comedy she was easy, nay more, accomplished, and there was a joyousness about her that, fanciful as the idea may be, and remembering all that has been said of Mrs. Jordan, I could not have imagined existing in any woman hackneyed in acting as a trade ; certainly I have never seen it to the same extent in any other performer. Her great excellence was in girlish, simple, confiding characters, and I really believe in this line she never had a superior. Never was a performer, male or female, a greater favourite for so long a time, and however her place may be supplied, I am pretty certain that no one will ever have the same hold upon the public. Much of this is no doubt to be accounted for by the fact, that she may be said to have been alone as an actress for so many years, and that without her theatricals

in Calcutta must have been at a stand still; but that would not have accounted for her high place in public estimation, maintained to the last, had she not been endowed with rare talents for the profession she embraced at a very early period of her life. On her return from England she opened a small theatre in a most excellent situation, the old Chowringhee having been destroyed by fire during her absence. Her success was great, and having revived an amusement that had been for some time dormant, with much promise of future support, at the close of an eight months' season a subscription was commenced for a new Theatre. The design was carried out on a very large scale and involved her in heavy difficulties. The House was sold with her consent by the mortgagee about a year ago—she can hardly be said ever to have been its proprietress,—but as an actress her services were at once secured and handsomely acknowledged. Upon those Boards which she had so often graced, and before an audience she had so often delighted, she met her death. She has left three children unprovided for, a boy in England and two girls here. The present proprietress has given up the House for their Benefit on the 22d instant, and I am very sure the receipts will be to the fullest farthing the Theatre will yield.

I should like, knowing that you are a theatrical man, to have said something more about Mr. Vining, but the length of this letter precludes it. Suffice it then that we regard him, looking to the versatility of his talent and his admirable Stage management, as about the most valuable acquisition the *Sans Souci* could have received.

The *Hindustan* took her departure on the morning of the 15th, and the refusal of the Company's Agent to furnish the public with a list of her passengers' names has caused a good deal of discussion, and much dissatisfaction. No reason for withholding it has been assigned. The popular supposition, and it is really the only one that suggests itself, is that it was for the convenience of parties who were taking French leave. On her last "homeward" voyage as she calls her return from the Red Sea, she brought back from Galle Sir Lawrence Peel, our Chief Justice, renovated I am happy to say in health and strength by his visit to the new Sanatarium at Nuwara Eliya.

I am now writing at 10 P.M. and the October Mail is not yet in.

Believe me,

My dear Alfred,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, December 20th, 1813.

MY DEAR ALFRED,

When I closed my last on the 19th ultimo, I was expecting the hourly arrival of the October Mail. The Express only made its appearance on the 24th, and the general delivery was not complete until seven days after,—56 from time of despatch; and this is the way the *Overland* from Europe drags its slow length along, after being by incapable vessels transported from Suez to Bombay, and there entrusted to the Post Office. But of this more anon.

Our political news this month is of small import. Dost Mahomed is not dead, but it would seem his life had been attempted. From Afghanistan we have nothing of a definite character; the same may be said of the Punjaub: we are in the constant receipt of reports, but it would be unsafe to trust them further than as disclosing a state of internal disorganization which it is ut-

terly impossible can long continue without another outbreak. The month has brought no change in the state of affairs at Gwalior: reports of an intention to submit are followed by stories of preparation for resistance, and then again we are told the policy of the Durbar is pacific.

In the mean time all our Military arrangements are going on, and it is expected that the Army would commence its march from Agra on or about the 15th instant.

In Oude there was the alarm of a Nepaulese invasion, which was so far correct that about 7,000 men crossed the frontier, in retaliation, it is said, for a foray made by Dursan Singh, a subject of the King of Oude's. They seem to have retraced their steps on hearing that he had been carried a prisoner to Lucknow and deprived of all his appointments. This affair caused some excitement; the King's troops were ordered out and despatches sent off to Lord Ellenborough, and various Corps were warned to hold themselves in immediate readiness for service should they be called on by His Excellency the Envoy. I may mention here that Sir William Nott has been compelled from ill health to take leave of absence. He is now on his way down to Calcutta, and will be here between the 10th and 15th

proximo: whether he will take a sea voyage, or not is uncertain, but the probability is that he will do so. Sir George Pollock has been gazetted to officiate at the Court of Lucknow during his absence, and at the same time the *Gazette* tells us "the Governor General deeply regrets, that ill health should for a time compel Major General Sir W. Nott, G. C. B. to withdraw his valuable services from the Government." Lord Ellenborough has shown much judgment in appreciating the value of this able man. There has been a report that Sir William was offered the Adjutant Generalship of the Army. I believe there is no truth in this; it has gone abroad in anticipation even of any statement about a probable vacancy by the retirement of General Lumley.

From Scinde the reports are as melancholy as they were last month; they are of sickness and death, and the probability of a rising. When Lord Ellenborough seized Scinde and dubbed it a province of the British Empire, his great mind probably teemed with magnificent visions of wide-spreading civilization, and gold-coining commerce, while not very indistinct was an Earl's Coronet. These ends were enough to sanction any means with a man of enterprise and spirit, and the spoliation, or robbery as it has been undisguised-

ly called, give him no uneasiness. If he has been at peace with himself since he must be an extraordinary man, or rather something more or less than man. Nearly twelve months have elapsed since the battle of Meannee enabled his Lordship to write a foolish paragraph about the abolishment of slavery and the transit duties, as if to redress those enormities we had overthrown and seized the Ameers. What has been done? Nothing—What is the state of our countrymen in this new province? Frightful. Grim death has there set up his throne and called the place Golgotha. For months we have heard but of disease and suffering; the dispatches from Scinde have been hospital returns! No word has yet escaped the Government of England in approval of what has been done, but as they have not repudiated that interpretation of the “Peace in Asia” policy which is explained in the word Aggression, the Governor-General is left to take his pleasure, and our gallant troops their chance. It is believed here from private letters from England that Scinde, as a province of the British Empire, is to be abandoned—that its expatriated and imprisoned Chiefs are to be restored, and that such terms will be made as may seem expedient to us, while we shall of

course take credit for an act of gracious moderation and generosity. This is believed, and it has been said that the question of right done, or wrong persevered in, is declared to be a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. If you show us that we can hold the country without a heavy drain on the public exchequer, do it, and things may go on ; if the expense is to be heavy and immediate and the returns prospective, it cannot be done. How much meaner a slave does gold make of the great man than of the humble ! Right and wrong will never be weighed by political hucksters without those filthy money-counters.

Scinde has been a British possession for months, and we have done nothing but bury our dead ; the chance not being very remote that the sword of the enemy will ere long destroy whom pestilence hath spared ; and this appears to excite no particular attention : people mutter the name of the Governor-General and then look to Heaven ; and I know not where else they should look, for the Ministry would rather I believe sacrifice an Army than their places. Why was the Scinde question thrown over the last Session ? Because, unscrupulous as party is it shrunk from supporting a measure that, flagrant in the eyes of man-

kind, had not even the great argument of ready profit to stand upon. And what is likely to be the result? That the Ameers will be restored, and that after all the sacrifice of human life that has, and yet will take place, we shall make no better terms for British interests beyond the Indus than Lord Auckland's policy would have secured years ago.

It is said that Sir Jasper Nicholls' advice is that the country should be subsidised, the Corps being Irregulars and natives of the country, and indeed it seems hopeless that European troops should be able to face the climate throughout the year. I have news from Sukkur to the 27th ultimo, the third letter received during the month. One of the 10th mentioned that of the Brigade there 2,374 were on the sick list, and that of the Europeans of the Artillery 43 out of 164 had been buried since leaving Ferozepore. By the 23d this mortality had increased to 60, and on the 27th to 70. My correspondent gives me the names of 35 officers who have been compelled to leave in the short space of two months, and after mentioning that 50 men of the 55th Regiment N. I. had been carried off from the first of the month, and giving other details, says, "At this rate we shall soon be annihilated; no

Beloochies with their matchlocks and tulwars needed." The Bombay Government is advertising for medical men to proceed to Scinde, and well it may. At Sukkur with the sickness of which I have told you there was but one medical man left ! and upon his retaining his health, as the letter I have quoted says, depends the lives of a detachment of European Artillery, three Regiments and the Staff. So much for Scinde, the great Ellenborough robbery !

From China we have intelligence down to the end of October. Major Eldred Pottinger, C. B. who went round from this some months ago has been appointed an Aide-de-Camp to the Plenipotentiary, and was to take home the Supplemental Treaty for the approval and ratification of Her Majesty's Government. It provides for the opening of trade at the five ports under the Tariff already fixed and published, and prohibits it with other places under penalty of confiscation of vessel and cargo. There is no mention of Opium in it. The 8th Article provides that all foreigners who have hitherto traded at Canton shall be admitted to the* five open ports on the same terms as the English. The Supplementary Treaty was to be ratified by the Emperor of China immediately, for which purpose

one of the four copies that were signed and sealed by the Chinese Commissioner and the British Plenipotentiary was forwarded to Peking forthwith. A correspondence had taken place between the Plenipotentiary and Keying, the Commissioner, relative to the appearance of two vessels, apparently English, which had endeavoured to open a trade on the Chinese Coast. The Plenipotentiary points out to the Commissioner, that the power of checking these illicit dealings rests with the local authorities, and recommends that any Chinese linguist who may land on the coast from any vessel for such purpose should be seized, and made to pay a fine of 1,000 dollars. The Plenipotentiary promises that if the Commissioner approves of the above suggestion, he will cause to be seized and treat as a pirate any British vessel which may attempt to release by force a linguist so detained.

The question of the month has been as you will have anticipated, Steam Communication between England and India. The Hall of Commerce gathering, of which we received accounts by the last mail, at which Mr. Abel Smith as the chairman had to introduce all the propositions, as if every gentleman in the City of London was ashamed of them, naturally roused

us here to the expression of public opinion. There has been some angry feeling, caused entirely by the letter of Mr. Allen the Secretary of the Peninsular Company, pledging it to no disturbance of the present arrangements with Calcutta, at the same time that the scheme emanating from the Directors, and by them submitted to the authorities, proposes to carry the Indian Mails between Suez and Bombay by the *Hindostan*, *Bentinck* and a third vessel building. This we call an interference with, and interruption of the direct line, as it was originally contemplated, and as it has been partially carried out. To breach of faith then is to be added the attempt to bamboozle; there is no gay bold-faced indifference to a pledge, cunning is preferred, and while the Government is bargained with for the *Mails* to Bombay,—Ceylon, and Madras, are told their *communication* with Europe will not be interrupted. You will of course see the Memorial that, *mutatis mutandis*, has gone home by the *Bentinck* addressed to the Lords of the Treasury, the Board of Controul and the Court of Directors. There is one statement in it altogether unanswerable; and really it might have stood alone. We say that the direct line, by which we mean the one hitherto occupied by the *Hin-*

dostan, is the only one by which there can be four perfect interchanges of correspondence in the year between England and Madras and Bengal. The extra time occupied *viâ* Bombay; if only 3 days (but I am sure it would be 5) each way makes 6 on the double voyage, and this would render it impossible by that route. The tabular statement prepared by the Company, and which was before the Meeting in London, intended to show the arrivals of the Mails during the past fifteen months was, as far as Calcutta is concerned, incorrect from beginning to end. It gives the arrival of the Express correctly, and then assumes that the Mail came in two days after, whereas it has never been all delivered within two days, but has been straggling in during eight! The object of this was evident. As it was no part of the Company's proposition to accelerate the Mail further than Bombay, it was desirable to keep as much as possible out of view the entire time it would take in its transit. What does it signify to us that our Mail is accelerated to Bombay, if its subsequent dilatoriness makes its time greatly in excess of that by the direct line! Why, it is common that our Mail is not fully delivered here in 50 days—the very last was 56—and we show that we can have it perfect in one delivery in

38 ! Pray ask any gentleman to show what he means in figures, when he talks of accelerating the Mails to Madras and Bengal by sending them to Bombay ? When we have a rail-road it may be possible, but not much before. We have reckoned 25 days between this and Suez : the *Hindustan* has accomplished the distance in 20 days and 5 hours under steam, and you will therefore see that a very great allowance is made for detention, indeed much more than necessary ; for these fine boats only ought to stop once to coal, viz. at Aden, filling up at Madras and Galle just as long as they are waiting for passengers and the Mails.

The feeling in Calcutta is decidedly in favour of the Oriental and Peninsular Company's being entrusted with the Mails in the Indian seas as well as the Mediterranean, but of course strongly opposed to any interference with existing arrangements. The course is a very simple one,—to have boats from Bombay to Suez of a character superior to the wretched things at present running, and to make the latter port the point of junction. I am satisfied the expense would be much less to the Government than is at present disbursed, and the plan more profitable to the Company than any attempt to induce Ceylon, Madras and Bengal passengers

to go to the Western Presidency: there is one point common to the two lines, and justice as well as sense points that there they should meet. If the Government only considers that if necessary as large a revenue may be made by postage alone as now, with that great increase to be calculated upon which steady and rapid communication always creates, I think they will have no difficulty in making such an annual grant to the Company, as with their other sources of profit will be highly remunerative. It is possible that already some arrangement may have been concluded, though we shall hope to the last Government will not have sacrificed the interests of the whole of our possessions East of Cape Comorin to gain a few days between Southampton and Bombay. It is said that the *Hindostan* now in the Red Sea is to proceed thence to Bombay, and assuredly this was stated in London some months ago by Mr. Willcox to a gentleman now in Calcutta, who desired to remain in England beyond the date of the voyage for which he had booked.

The *Bentinck* arrived here on the 23d ultimo, having been between 88 and 89 days on her voyage, of which she was rather better than 64 days under steam. She is said not to be as fast a boat as her elder sister, but much more commodious and bet-

ter suited to our climate. There is I am told a lavish of finery about her, which is all money wasted ; plain panelling would be preferred by nine people out of ten : to keep paintings and gilding in order is costly, and faded tawdry is considerably less respectable than cleanly simplicity. There were some parties given on board during her stay, at which—perhaps not an opportunity chosen with the best taste—the company was told that Calcutta did not support the vessels, and that the number proceeding by the *Bentinck* would not pay for the oil and tallow consumed on the voyage ! It was said too that the community was led by “ low papers,” &c. &c.—further evidence, indisputable, that the Indian Press is not what it ought to be. It is right to say that Captain Kellock had nothing to do with this, and that he is spoken of in the highest terms by his passengers, who have presented him with a handsome piece of plate in testimony of their esteem. The *Bentinck* left Calcutta on the morning of the 15th, and got to sea the following day ; she carries about 36 adult passengers. There are few persons going home just now, and it was a great mistake in choosing January—perhaps the best month in the year for departures—as the one in which there should be no Steamer.

I told you in my last that the Company's Agent had declined to furnish the Press with the names of the passengers by the *Hindustan*. He has thought better of it and supplied the list on this occasion as usual, the "low papers" not excepted, all have had it.

Among the distinguished men who have left our shores by this opportunity is Mr. George Thompson, or as he has been generally called here, Mr. George Grievance Thompson: he came out travelling companion to Dwarkanauth Tagore, Esq. and returns to England, Home Agent to the Landholders' Society, Corresponding Member of the Bengal British India Society, Ex-Chuckerbutty Champion, and Vakeel to the King of Delhi. Whether all these honours promise much is for his consideration; I suspect not: whether the career he has run is calculated to benefit him as a public man may be matter of opinion: if he stood not high before, on account of his excessive cosmopolitanism, it is possible he may find himself yet a peg lower. Mr. Thompson in nothing acted worse than foolishly, except in the part he took on the subject of Cooly emigration. His conduct in that matter is indefensible, and it will assuredly be visited upon him should he put his threat into execution of

agitating Great Britain on the subject. That he could effectually do it is hardly possible, for of himself he has little or no influence, and it may well be doubted whether any party will hire his services to talk down the mass of incontestible evidence with which the authorities and the people of England have been supplied: The course taken by Mr. Thompson leads strongly to the inference that having been some time under the shadow of a King's protection—an unusual berth for a patriot of his order—he was desirous of identifying himself before his departure with some great Indian question which might be advantageously discussed at home, and that the farce of the tyranny exercised against Young Bengal having exploded, he thought the atrocities inflicted on the poor Cooly would be a taking subject. In ignorance of the history of emigration from this country he over-reached himself, and went so far as to be challenged at the time by the *Calcutta Star* to make good his assertions. Of this he took no notice, but subsequently, driven up into a corner by being told his character was at stake, he briefly intimated in a letter to the Editor that he had not time for controversy, though about two months had elapsed from the penning of his libels, and though he had

excused himself in the first instance from proving their truth, his papers, &c., being in Calcutta ! Mr. Thompson has damaged his reputation by this conduct, even among his best admirers, and it may possibly turn out that he finds it prudent to let the emigration question alone.

A special meeting was called the other day of the committee of the Landholders' Society "to receive Mr. George Thompson and take leave of him, previous to his departure." The real object would appear from the report to have been the consideration of what should be done to hold him harmless in a pecuniary point of view in the laborious Agency he has so kindly undertaken. Mr. Thompson "asked no remuneration, unless some great questions arose in reference to which the Society would require him to devote all his time to its object"—but he wanted an office, and for this "he must have the sanction of the Society; and the means of defraying a portion at least of the expenses connected with the establishment, that the world may not only know of the existence of the Society, but see that it had a local habitation and a name in the great metropolis of the empire." That a two-pair back will materially aid in the regeneration of India, to which Mr. T. and the Society are equally

devoted, there can be no question, but the local habitation and the name of the "British India Society" would have answered every purpose. I presume that Body is not defunct.

Mr. Thompson was good enough to speak favourably of the Civil Service: "he had gone both into European and Native Society; and he must in justice to the servants of the East India Company say, that he had experienced from them the most perfect courtesy, and he might even say with a liberal and friendly confidence, so far as was consistent with their official relations and duties." If, my dear Alfred, you turn to my letter of March last you will find that one of the Chuckerbutties declared that the corruption of the Police was rather attributable to "the aristocratic and haughty Civilians" than any thing else, and that Mr. Thompson followed, expressing his high gratification at "the intelligence and sound sense of those who had addressed the meeting,"—so you will see what a little travel does for a man. In the same letter I mentioned that the Chuckerbutty aforesaid had referred to Mr. T. as "that distinguished visitor, who has appeared on their shores to raise a fallen nation from callous apathy, and ignoble bondage." It would be amusing to hear this Native

patriot's account of how much Mr. Thompson has raised his nation, and what his anticipations are now that he leaves his shores with the multifarious appointments I have already enumerated. Calcutta is of all places in the world the one for Testimonials; that the Apostle of Liberty should have been allowed to leave without a silver teapot is to me astonishing: but he is to have an office—not a salaried one, but one rented: there was every proper delicacy in the treatment of this difficult subject. A letter was read from Dwarkanath Tagore—who, by the by, I am told does not return to Europe this cold weather as intended—expressing a wish that the appointment of an Agent “should be carried out in a manner which would be creditable to the Society and do justice to the cause in which they were embarked,” and Mr. Rogers in reading it observed, that he “regarded it as of the first and most vital importance to have an office”—in which I have said Mr. Thompson fully agrees, though no one appears to have thought of this vitally important affair before. It was therefore resolved, “That the Secretaries be directed to make the necessary arrangements with Mr. Thompson to provide him with a suitable office in London, to be called “the Bengal Landholders' Society's Office.” Thus pleasantly endeth

Thompson's season in India. As a sort of appendix remark I would observe, that it was a great mistake on the part of the Society in not suggesting to Mr. T. that, though he had no time for a controversy on the Cooley cruelty question, it was due to them he should state some of the facts upon which his letter to the *Delhi Gazette* was founded, because as the Society had addressed the Government months ago, in a paper prepared by Mr. Thompson, pointing out the imperfections of the system, it might look awkward that pertinent matters within his "personal knowledge" should have been omitted, to the great weakening of their case: but this no doubt was an oversight.

One word upon the Emigration question. You will have learnt from my last that the Government here has prohibited the departure of Coolies after the end of this year, unless engaged by the agent of the Mauritius Government, who would of course have to pay all their expenses: that body has since published a notification that instead of £7, as heretofore, a premium of £4 per head will be paid on all arrivals after the commencement of 1844; so that *here* prohibited they are *there* invited, though with diminished bonus;—this is legislation!

I have mentioned the rapid arrival of the last Mail : as one of the many incidental advantages of this route, all our Periodicals were left behind, from the fanciful notion of the commander of the *Cleopatra* that they came within the definition of “merchandize for sale,” which these armed vessels (!) may not carry. We could have reconciled ourselves to the loss of the *Monthlies* and even *Quarterlies*, but the stoppage of *Punch* has been a severe trial to all but the Tectotallers, who dare not say they have a taste for it.

I mentioned the 25th ultimo as the day on which Lord Ellenborough was to start for the Upper Provinces. He took his departure from Barrackpore on the evening of that day—affording the strongest evidence we have yet had that he really does not read the papers, for it is certain he would have made it the 24th or 26th had he known that so much of his intentions had transpired. But the secrecy of his movements and of his designs is well managed on the whole. No one up to this hour knows a single thing he has done for the country, nor ventures to anticipate any. As to his movements he was never heard of, nor mentioned in the papers, for one-and-twenty days after his start, and I could not help observing that if anything were to be written of him it must ne-

cessarily be in the shape of an advertisement—
 “Missing, an elderly gentleman who left his home three weeks ago, and has not since been heard of.” But within the last few days his progress has been tracked, and we hear he was expected at Agra about the 12th. A letter from Cawnpore mentions that he was looking ill; if India does not agree with him better than he with India, no wonder: it will be important news when we hear he is indisposed—to remain. He travelled up in a four-wheeled carriage built for the purpose, convertible into a bed and all that sort of thing: it was propelled by manual labour, and over the good roads they managed to cover from 6 to 7 miles an hour.

His Lordship's departure has had no effect upon the gaiety of Calcutta, for he disliked it too much to add to the *agrémens* of Society: there was a mutual cordiality of indifference which rendered separation rather a relief than otherwise. The Theatre, which is the only public place of amusement, has suffered I think from want of the high patronage it has been accustomed to enjoy, and with the best Company it has ever had, the audiences, with some few exceptions, have been indifferent. I mentioned the melancholy death of Mrs. Leach, and that

an evening was set apart on which the receipts of the House were to be devoted to her family. I anticipated they would amount to the fullest farthing the Theatre would yield; it was almost the worst house I have ever seen in Calcutta! So much for prediction. Had she been alive her Benefit would certainly have been worth from £350 to £400, she was in the habit of receiving more; being dead her children received probably about £40, allowing for some who may have taken tickets without attending. I remember some time ago writing about the charity of Calcutta; I have seen reasons, more than once, to modify the opinion I then expressed. I am afraid it is rather a question of who asks, than on whose behalf the request is made. A subscription has been open for some weeks and it amounts to about £110; under all the circumstances of the case I should have put it down at £1,000 at least. Mrs. L. received half as much more to aid her in building a Theatre. During the past month Mr. Vining has played the *Stranger*—and excellently he acquitted himself—and *Charles Surface*, in which also he was eminently successful. To-morrow he plays *Romeo*. We had two new arrivals by the *Bentinck*, Mr. and Mrs. Ormonde; Mrs. O. played *Lady Teazle*, but her forte would

not appear to be in that line. The gentleman made his first appearance in *Clermont* in *The Artist's Wife*, a part which offers small test of the general ability of an actor, and in the Comedy I have mentioned he was the *Sir Benjamin Backbite*, not making it the Sir Benjamin we are accustomed to. Mr. and Mrs. O. gave this evening at the Town Hall a *mélange* of Lecture, Singing, Imitations, &c. &c. an entertainment which I understand they were successful with at the Adelaide Gallery. We have further a portion of a French Operatic Company on their way home from Batavia, and with our resident vocal talent there is good promise of some half dozen nights of delightful novelty. They open on the 29th with *Lucie de Lamermoor*. Thus you see we are equal to Tragedy, Comedy, Opera, and I may safely add Farce. You will smile at my telling you of matters of interest so purely local, but the fact is what we love we love to talk about.

Believe me,

My dear Alfred,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, January 20th, 1844.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

Your last letter, first I hope of another long series, was the most welcome new year's gift it was my fortune to receive ;—may you live till your great English Revolution is realized, and write me faithfully the particulars of its progress. I am afraid Clubs, in which you so much luxuriate, will share the fate of so much of aristocracy as you would gladly see swept away, for they are essentially haughty, domineering, and exclusive.—It surprises me that a backbone Radical can regard them without horror, for what are they but coteries banded together to benefit themselves at the expense of a large body of the people,—the hard-working, honest, industrious, over-taxed, oppressed tradesmen of the metropolis, who are called upon to furnish one house for the accommodation of hundreds instead of making luxurious each particular domicile of each particular member.—Consi-

der, too, the injustice done to the butcher, baker, brewer, grocer, milkman, buttermilkman, wineman and every other man who lives by supplying the good things of life : you Clubites eat, drink, and sleep at easy prices, enabling by your selfish confederation an important dignitary, you probably call a House Steward, to beat down honest market prices in consideration of large orders, when if you lived like respectable men at home, your wives or housekeepers would have to market for you severally, and would venture on nothing more than chaffering for a half-penny a pound in the price of mutton, or getting five pounds and a half of potatoes for two-pence farthing ! Then, consider whether these general male offices are not destructive of that love of home which is supposed to characterize our countrymen ? Will you allow the domestic virtues to be perilled by them ? You are a Radical, and you are eloquent in your denunciations of cliques, and coteries and parties—you are all for the people, the industrious, hard-working unwashed, and the intelligent, modest, moral middle class ; so am I, but my dear S. just tell me, don't you think there is something anti-liberal in your Clubs, don't you exclude a man because he is this, or is not the other, and does not the honour of being a Clubman beget

something like contempt for those who are without the pale. Then, again, Clubs are prejudicial to, if not destructive of, independent thinking—there is always a Club opinion—it is started by A. and B. some Gog and Magog who have the Club in their hands ; it is put up for adoption, and the idle look in to ascertain what they are to think as regularly as they do to ask for their letters. But enough, I enter no protest against them, and simply throw out these hints for your consideration. I now proceed to the news of the month.

The last commentary on “ Peace in Asia,” as I have before said Lord Ellenborough’s boast and pledge, has been two severe battles in the Gwalior territory, in which we have been victorious, but not without fearful casualties. The battles of Maharajpore and Punniar were both fought on the same day, the former by the Commander-in-Chief with an Army of 12,000 men opposed to about 16,000, and the latter by General Grey with a force of about 6,000 men, the enemy having it is said double the number. I do not purpose to give you any of the Military details, but refer you to the dispatches which are full enough : they did not make their appearance until the 16th, eleven days after we had news of

the engagements and our papers had published almost daily accounts from the field of battle. Beyond the gallantry of our troops, and never was it more distinguished, we have nothing to be proud of. We were out-generaled in politics and in war. The Governor-General crossed the Chumbul with the army, and received the submission of the Baice, who with the boy-king was positively expected to pay her respects in person. Time was thus gained, during which the most active preparations were made to oppose us, and when the enemy was prepared it was stated the Chiefs and army would not allow the Regent and Maharajah to stir. The order was then given to advance, and on the morning of the 29th the enemy's artillery opened on us from the village of Maharajapore, whither Lady Gough and party were proceeding to breakfast! The enemy had changed their advanced position during the night, and were within six miles of us without our having a notion that they had moved. Sir Hugh Gough has admitted that he was surprised and had in some degree to alter his dispositions; he says, the action commenced earlier than he expected; and speaks of the position in which the enemy was found as a very strong one. You will say that they ought not to have

been allowed to occupy a very strong position so immediately in our neighbourhood without our even knowing it, but so it was. There was but one order, "At them!" The opinion of a man who never was in the field is worth nothing, but it does not smack particularly of the art of war to go at once at powerful batteries advantageously disposed, before even such heavy guns as we had could be brought up: the best part of them had been sent back to Agra on the Khas-geewallah—the head and front of the rebels to our authority—having been given up. The fire with which our gallant fellows were received is described as terrific, and the list of killed and wounded, upwards of 1,000, tells its own tale. Sir Hugh Gough is open to severe censure for the part he played, which by all accounts was that of a private soldier, rather than of a General on whose coolness and judgment might depend the fortune of the day, and certainly the lives of hundreds of brave men. He was every where in the thick of the fight, charging the batteries, and exposing his life in a manner that is altogether without justification. The pure love of fighting was too strong for him; he could not bestow a thought on aught else, and it is said, though of course these anecdotes are to be taken

cum grano, that on a Cavalry officer riding up to him and asking him for orders, he replied—"Don't bother me—do just as you like." Certain it is that every one appears to have done as he liked: the end upon which all were bent on was victory, and that was achieved; but the means were hard fighting and nothing else. Sir Charles Napier, you will remember, exposed himself in a similar way at the battle of Meannee, but how differently were the two Generals situated. The odds in favour of the Belooches were prodigious, it was hand to hand work and every pair of hands was of the utmost importance; moreover our force such as it was, was under-officered, and Napier had to be here, there, and every where to head and inspirit his all-but-overpowered troops. He made his dispositions well, and then there was nothing for it but personal example in the heart of the fray. The great and frequently fatal error of undervaluing an enemy is one into which Sir Hugh is not again likely to fall: he has frankly confessed it, and we may receive in the confession a guarantee for the future. He possibly thought he had in the Mahrattas fellows of the flimsy material of Chinamen to deal with; he found them made of another stuff. This engagement must have lasted from four to five hours,

and it is clear that nothing less than that determination which will not see difficulties, or seeing them is but the more inflamed, could have carried the day, as the battle was fought. General Grey engaged at all disadvantage; after a long and wearying march of 16 miles, with only two hours of daylight and the enemy very strongly posted, yet his triumph was complete.

I have mentioned Lady Gough being on the field : there were ~~four~~ other ladies, Miss Gough, Mrs. General Smith, and Mrs. Captain Curtis. This will convince you that the chances of fighting were considered very remote. Before leaving Agra a recommendation was minuted that Officers should set a good example by leaving their families behind them, and it had been well had the example emanated from the highest authority as well as the recommendation. One would have thought the disasters in Afghanistan a sufficient warning, but it does not appear to have been so.

Lord Ellenborough too was there, just because it was the very last place he should have been in; that was the man all over. When he talked some months ago about his proper place being by the side of the Commander-in-Chief it was at a supper-table, and at the mahogany it was not material, nor would it have been of much conse-

quence even at a review, but for his being by his side in the front of an enemy's artillery is what few were prepared for. As I have said, he was considerably surprised himself, and very quickly found his place some where else ; or perhaps rather it was found for him, for I have little doubt he would have delighted in charging the batteries literally side by side with the fiery Chief, and earning a name in that profession to which he has so deeply regretted he was not bred. That the Governor-General should have accompanied this force must be regarded by all men of common sense as an act of extreme folly, to say the least of it. Fighting was possible, and he had no more business there than the ladies ; but if it had been the most improbable of events, what was the occasion of his presence ? Do not either of the Services possess a man fit to be trusted in negotiating a treaty even under his Lordship's will-directions ! Of course it is to be presumed his Lordship thinks not. The real fact however is, that Lord Ellenborough is among the weakest of men, and may fairly be said to be " pleased with a feather, (especially a military one) tickled with a straw." The parade of soldiering has as great charms for him as toy red-coats for an unbracketed urchin, and in the indulgence of this gratifi-

cation he forgets the claims a great country has upon all the ability with which Providence has blessed him. Parading peace when he desired to reflect upon a former administration, he has been at war ever since he came to the country, and will be if he remains here ten years. I am satisfied it is impossible for him to turn his attention to the arts of peace. He told the history of his Government when he said that India was a great camp and was only to be held by the sword.

You will see his proclamations touching this Gwalior business: they are without the bombast of his former productions, but as state papers lame, and as compositions discreditable. It is clear upon his Lordship's own authority, that a weak, vacillating, and therefore discreditable policy has prevailed for many months, and it may be said that it has led to the bloodshed which has again given the emphatic lie to "Peace in Asia." If the Proclamation does not do his Lordship justice, it is his own fault. There were some remarks, perhaps almost reflections, at the time, upon our Resident for quitting Gwalior; it now appears that he only obeyed instructions, while a statement of flagrant insults to the British Government is set forth. The Regent we had approved and publicly pledged ourselves

before the Chiefs to support, by us “ recognized as the responsible head of the Gwalior State was violently compelled to quit the Gwalior State in despite of the remonstrances of the British Resident”, and again we learn that under the influence of the Dada “ various acts were committed insulting and injurious to the British Government.” All this would not appear to have been enough to rouse Lord Ellenborough, but when a letter from our Government to the Maharanee was intercepted, it was considered at once “ virtual usurpation of the authority in the Gwalior State, which the British Government is bound to maintain in the house of Scindiah.” Strange, the forcible expulsion of the Regent should have been considered venial as compared with the pocketing of a dispatch ! It strikes one that the real usurpation of authority was complete when the former act was perpetrated. As far as the proclamation instructs us, there is nothing to show that but for the discovery of that letter having been intercepted we should ever have crossed the Chumbul at all, albeit our Resident had been insulted and our Government degraded. The proclamation talks a great deal about the child Maharajah, his tender age, his helpless position, and that it would be injurious to the good name of the British

Government were it not to interfere for his protection—but is it to us he owes it that he is still alive to need assistance?

It may almost be believed that Lord Ellenborough looked on with satisfaction at the course events were taking, and only waited till he might have full justification for putting an end to the Mahratta empire for ever;—this was once his intention on the provocation of a shot being fired—and that the terms now being made has been the consequence of hints from home that he had better not stretch the Lion's paw. Of the arrangement we have not definitively heard, but the *Calcutta Star* has given the following sketch of it:—

“ We learn from good authority by letters dated the 5th instant, that a Regency has been formed at Gwalior of which Ram Rao Phalkea is the head. A Force is to be levied of 10,000 men, whereof 5,000 are to be commanded by British Officers as a Field force, the remaining 5,000 are to act as Palace guards and to perform miscellaneous duties. The Seepree Contingent is to be doubled in number, that is to say it will consist of 2 battalions of regular Infantry, 800 Irregular Cavalry, and 8 Guns. These are the terms which have been dictated, but the body of

the Mahratta Army is established with about 200 pieces of Artillery in an entrenched camp, the old Cumpoo, as it is commonly called, about six miles from Gwalior, and there are doubts as to whether further serious collision will not occur before the final settlement of our relations."

This is the news from Gwalior, but I suspect more has to come: it will be fortunate if the large force here alluded to is dispersed without further bloodshed. I cannot quit the subject without a word or two to the memory of Lt. Col. Sanders, who was shot through the heart in Sir Hugh Gough's engagement. He was a man with an insatiable craving for distinction, and on every possible occasion sought what was to him no "bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth"; one of the best and bravest soldiers in the Bengal Army. He has died universally lamented.

We had a report last week that the Afghans had taken possession of Jumrood and Peshawur, driven the Punjaubees across the Attock, and made overtures to our Government for a simultaneous advance on Lahore; but this has not been confirmed: it was said too that the Seikhs had a large force with 50 guns at Kisoor, about fifteen miles from Ferozepore, and of this I believe there is no doubt. It is reported

that Lord E. proceeds to the latter place on his return from his present expedition.

From Scinde there is nothing new; the sickness is perhaps less than it was, but still most serious. It is a matter of congratulation that there has been no rising, for we were *in extremis*.

In my letter last month I mentioned that Major Eldred Pottinger, C. B. was about to start for England with the Supplemental Treaty with the Chinese Government, for the approval and ratification of Her Majesty. He was prepared to start when he was seized with the Hong-Kong Fever and in a few days was no more, leaving a name and fame behind him that few men are allowed to win at his years. It would be idle to say a syllable of his history, crowded as it is into a few years, and those as it were but the memory of yesterday. The Hero of Herat and Chareekar, the noble repudiator of the Afghan Treaty in the depth of our distresses at Cabul—signed *ex necessitate rei* under a protest which raised him above all his compeers, and showed how irrepressible was his gallantry and patriotism—will live in his acts though in posthumous tribute no pen record them.

They are written in the stirring passages of the day, and will ever do honour to the name he bore,

the army to which he belonged, and the country he served. Universal have been the expressions of admiration in his life and sorrow in his death. The Press of India has done him justice with one solitary exception. The *Englishman* has penned the most scandalous article on the part he took in affairs at Cabul after the death of Sir William Macnaghten. I say scandalous, for it asserts that he “put his hand to a document by which he purchased his own safety at the price of the honour of the British arms”; and again that he signed a treaty which “stipulated for the destruction of all the British forces in Afghanistan.” It has been pronounced “utterly devoid of all foundation,” and “revolting” by the *Friend of India*, one of the most temperate journals in this country. I will abstain from denouncing it, but it has aroused the indignation of all men. This is the same journal that took the occasion of the murder of Sir William Macnaghten to pen, perhaps a fouler libel upon him as Envoy than ever was perpetrated against a public functionary. I subjoin the notice that was taken by the *Calcutta Star* of this last outrage:—

“The public will remember the attack made in the columns of the *Englishman* upon the character of Sir William Macnaghten, after the melan-

choly death of that distinguished man. The foulest misconduct was charged upon him, and the character of the Journal was deliberately pledged to the truth of what it published. It is unnecessary to say more than that it was untrue, as we pronounced it to be the moment the cruel slanders appeared. Another great and good man has been taken from us in Major Eldred Pottinger, second to none in the noblest qualities of the soldier; one whose name will ever be remembered with pride even in connection with our national discomfiture and disgrace in Afghanistan. We attempted to pay a slight tribute to his memory on hearing of his death: our contemporary of the *Hurkaru* did the same; the *Englishman* has seized the opportunity to blacken that memory, and writes as follows:—

“ ‘ So far from blaming the Government for marking with its displeasure, those who assented to a treaty which stipulated for the destruction of all the British forces in Afghanistan, we cannot see how greater lenity could be shown, without encouraging a repetition of similar conduct, should the occasion for it ever again unfortunately occur. We regret indeed that the opportunity has been lost of impressing upon the army in general, by a public order, that no officer can be justified in

including in his own capitulation, other troops who may be in a condition to defend themselves. He is the sole judge of his own position, and may perhaps be justified in submitting to the humblest terms, in order to save the lives of his own followers. But nothing can justify him in purchasing safety for himself by including others in his misfortune; and he ought at all times to prefer dying with arms in his hands to such submission.' ”

This appears in the columns of a Military Journal, written of as noble-spirited a man as ever honoured a uniform. The hero of Herat, the head and heart of Chareekar, the man who stood alone against a Council of War at Cabul, and suggested one of three courses, all desperate, rather than compromise the honour or even the pecuniary interests of his country,—that man is charged with having “*assented to a treaty which stipulated for the destruction of all the British force in Affghanistan*”! Can any thing be more — we will not write the word. Eldred Pottinger charged with “*purchasing safety for himself by including others in his misfortune*”! Good God! what integrity, what honour, what gallantry is essential to the protection of a soldier's good name and fame when they are made the subject of comment in — a Military Journal!

This *Military Chronicle* records that he “remonstrated against the treaty, expressed his disbelief in its being of any avail, but yet he signed it,” and casts a doubt on the fact of his disapproval by adding :—

“ If he suffered his own judgment to be overcome by the persuasions of others, he was evidently unfit to be again placed in a situation of equal trust ; if he willingly assented to the terms agreed on, he was still more blameable ; in either case he had disqualified himself for that higher branch of the public service in which he had been placed, and if neglected, he can hardly be thought to have been ill used, by being replaced in the ordinary career of the service, for being a party to an act for which the principal, had he survived, would have incurred ignominious punishment.”

The contemptuous neglect of this distinguished man is here justified. The *Bombay Times* says, “ He was requited for the numberless and valuable services he had conferred by being remanded to his Corps as a plain Lieutenant of Artillery stripped of employment and denied acknowledgment,”—the *Englishman* “ cannot by any means concur” that he was a neglected man !

The inferences of this Military Journal are so notoriously repugnant to justice, as respects

Eldred Pottinger's share in the treaty of accommodation which preceded the disastrous retreat of the army, that they can be only accounted for by a reference to that spirit which colours truth herself with the peculiar shade of the dominant party. It is a safe thing in these days to decry, and vilify the gallant men who bore a part in public affairs in Afghanistan. It is a good principle to look at all abstract merit through the lens of Lord Ellenborough's prejudices:—thus there is no such thing as valour,—there is naught but *Tory* valour; nor judgment, unless of a *Tory* character; nor devotion, except to a *Tory* cause; nor public spirit, nor zeal, nor military skill, nor diplomatic talent in the abstract: these to the paltry pick-thanks of the day are non-existent things if unconnected with the partizans or protégés of ruling authority. When Eldred Pottinger was forced to sign the treaty he objected to—*alone* of all about him, he did it because even this poor paper-protection would have been invalid had he not signed it. Those about him were rushing on their own destruction, as he told them, and when they could not be turned aside, surely it was not his part to precipitate it by refusing to ratify that which gave them the only chance of safety. The thing is palpable, and self-evident,

so much so as to lead to the honorable acquittal of Eldred Pottinger by a court-martial whose verdict might have been more pleasing in certain quarters, had it been less true. But those who pronounced it were honorable men, soldiers and gentlemen. It was left for a *Military Chronicle* to pass by their decision upon the charges brought against a military man, and to say that after all his services both in civil duties and those of a soldier, after his acquittal from all stain by a constituted tribunal, and the honours accorded to him by his monarch, and by his immediate masters, he was "justly" neglected and unemployed.

There are a sort of men who in the moral world, play the part of those ideal creatures whom Eastern fancy believes to batten on the buried carcasses of the dead. These are the *Ghouls* which eat into the reputation of departed good men, and like those ugly afrites, nourish themselves by destroying the remains of noble beings. With such men, when one as distinguished as unfortunate, has gone to his long account, there is a struggle who shall first jump on his grave, if by so doing they may elevate themselves on the mound which covers the cold corpse below, but so high as to be seen of some one sitting higher, and who hated the departed. Then

they are happy, then their task is accomplished, they then have not violated truth, nor insulted the memory of one, the pride of his profession, in vain.

And is not this humiliating—ay, and more than humiliating. Who doubts it to be so, but the few whom unfortunately the prejudices of party may blind, or that baser crew who assume an opinion not their own, to curry favour for the time with some dangerous, wayward, despotic man in power? He will however strut and fret his hour and pass away, and they and their opinions with him. It is not such influence that can tarnish the merit of a well-earned name, while as for the meaner instruments, *Military Chronicles*, and the like, that did their little dirty work of vilification to meet the dominant spirit of the momentarily powerful, truly the effect they will produce will be that (as has been cleverly said) of ‘*a toad spitting at a sunbeam.*’ Meanwhile let the slanderers be soundly lashed, for they deserve no mercy, and should have none.

Believe me the sentiments here expressed are those which are felt far and wide, those which I have no doubt will be participated in at home.

I wrote a few lines last month about Mr. George Thompson. He will be on his old stage again before this reaches you, and I am

rather curious to see in what character he will come out. It will hardly help him I think that, professing to be the Friend of the People of India he is the representative of the Landholders of Bengal ! But you shall hear more of this. His career here was one of the most inconsistent that a man could run. He came out to India in company with Dwarkenauth Tagore, and I suppose it is no offence to say, under his countenance : if a Queen could countenance Dwarkenauth, Dwarkenauth might countenance Mr. George Thompson. Dwarkenauth had extolled the Government of India, and had owned with gratitude the blessings that had followed British dominion. Mr. T. was impressed with some indistinct idea of an extensive system of cruelty and oppression. What sympathy could there be between these opinions ? In fact there was none. Mr. Thompson was an idle man just at that time, and Dwarkenauth may have paid some of his influential acquaintances the compliment of listening to their suggestion that he would make an impression in India ; or he may have foreseen events pretty much as they have fallen out. Here they arrived together, and the orator lost no time in setting to work, drawing about him all the boys of the Colleges and Schools, who were delighted with his

harangues and immediately entered into honourable rivalry in verbose declamation, and it is a question who had the best of it. The public looked on with perhaps even more contempt than the best part of the Press expressed, and Dwarkenauth,—what did he? Certainly he gave no countenance to the Anglo-Indian Agitator. The Chuckerbutty Faction talked itself out; its principal members fell off, and Mr. Thompson seeing his false step, made his second almost as false, by throwing himself into the arms of the Landholders. He then, by an influence which the reader will fix without difficulty, was placed in the falsest of positions as the paid advocate of a King whose grievances, real or imaginary, he had to learn after he undertook his cause; and to crown the whole, having come out the Regenerator of India, the friend of its *people*, he returns the agent (with an office) of the Landholders of Bengal! We are now told, too, that it is likely he will be a Member of Parliament before he gets home—he missed being one before he came out—and thus add another to the laborious obligations with which he has already loaded himself. Who will not say that Dwarkenauth saw far enough into the course of events! As a private individual Mr. Thompson

is an agreeable, well-informed companion ; temperate in his manner and conciliatory in his expression of opinions, one of whom it is painful to say that as a public man he is—A HUMBUGH.

Of local news there is no great deal. The *Express* with letters to the 6th ultimo came in yesterday morning. We were looking for the Steamer *Hindostan*, but an accident to the *Great Liverpool* has detained her, and she is not now expected for another week. The Government has done itself credit by declaring all Lotteries not under the sanction of Government, illegal. This has been specially called for by some schemes promising prizes to the extent of about £80,000 at a time, by fellows not worth a rupee beyond what they may have swindled from the credulous. A reference was made home some time back on the subject of Lotteries generally, and in the meantime the Government affair was stopped. We may conclude, therefore, either that no reply has yet been received, or that the home authorities are not prepared to forego the Wheel—but I conclude the former.

Major General Sir William Nott, G. C. B. and family arrived in Calcutta last week, and I am sorry to say the gallant Officer's health is such as to compel him to proceed to the Cape. He leaves

by the *Earl of Hardwicke*, which vessel sails in all the first week of next month. A Fancy Ball is to be given to Lady Nott, on the 29th instant. The Hon. Mr. Clerk and Dwarkenauth Tagore arrived here last night : the former gentleman proceeds to England ; the latter I think I mentioned before does not. You may quarrel, my dear Squab, with this letter if you will, and growl over it in your Club Arm-Chair, but the Mail, generally, you will find is interesting. Be you as amusing, and instructive too, as you were in your last in all your future favours, and I shall not only be for “ auld lang syne,” your’s faithfully, but

Yours very much obliged,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, February 18th, 1844.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

You tell me I am a Whig at heart. What can I have done to deserve this? If you mean that I am of that party it amounts to gross defamation: if you mean that my political principles are Whig, then I can only surmise something discreditable, for I never had an opportunity of discovering what Whig principles were. I told you in my last that I was, equally with yourself, for the people; the industrious, hard-working unwashed; and the intelligent, modest, moral middle class. Is that what you understand by Whiggery? I have not found that either of the great parties which began quarrelling about Royal things, and have never agreed upon anything since — but that public virtue is not its own reward, whatever private may be — ever considered they had anything to do with the people but coerce them, and I have frequently thought that if selection between

the two must be made it would be preferable to enlist with bold, gay-faced villainy rather than march in the ranks of men who have always been political cowards, and the greatest cowards as there has been least to fear. I have never heard a gentleman — I mean an honest man — avow himself a Whig since Lord Melbourne's administration proved the insincerity of these liberal confederates for place : it is a name that has become discreditable, while the party wants the last sense of shame — possessed by the Tories — to change it. In by-gone times men grew up in Whiggism as something their fathers had owned, and perhaps had as definite an idea of any set of principles it represented as the disciples of Toryism had of their faith, with the great mass of whom it meant something very genteel. I once heard a woman of some rank severely rebuke a daughter, who was rattling away on things she did not understand as if she had been returned in breeches for an open borough, and was delivering a set maiden speech — for daring to say that she was a Whig. The girl afterwards asked me to explain the meaning of the words which she confessed to me she thought were election names for blue and green ribbons. She told me she had asked her

mother and that she had told her that Toryism meant Aristocracy, Whiggism Shopkeepers, and Radicalism domestic servants,—to which explanation she had ventured to reply,

“Why, Mama, Fyshe Palmer is not a shop-keeper.”

“No, my dear, but he associates with them.”

This is a fact.

Now-a-days if people know nothing more about Whiggery they know it is something discreditable, and will have nothing to say to it: call me a Tory for choice and let me have the benefit of the gentility. I would a couple of years ago have called myself a Radical—but can a man with any principles be content to be such a thing as a Roebuck? Chartism, as it is propounded, I must disavow. Your no-nothing men are not to my fancy, and even if they were Republicans I am afraid I could not go with them, for I entertain the idea that a Republic is an admirable form of government for a people in the highest possible stage of enlightenment—not for those who have almost every thing to learn and very much to be humanized in. Can you understand a man being in favour of the monarchical form of government—hereditary if you will, as saving a good deal of trouble,—but

opposed to the poisonous influences exercised by a class-interest to the destruction of the principle of the thing professed, making that despotic in their hands which should be limited by the laws, in which laws the people should be heard. I confess myself of those who think the theory of a limited monarchy a very beautiful one: the theory of our constitution is a thing to be worshipped; the constitution in practice has been more hateful than a despotism; much more hateful, for one might rule for the benefit of the million and a good man always would do so to the best of his ability; class-legislators—never. I say, my dear Squab, if you can understand there being a party who would for these days of popular instruction uphold the form of government under which we live, give reality to a fiction and substance to a shadow, and can find a generic name for that party, you may enrol me as soon as you please, but if you love me call me not a Whig.

Now let me open my budget. Turning to my last I find that I gave you a sketch of the probable arrangement for the settlement of the Gwalior affair: so it was concluded, and our dear Lord is coming “from the wars, from the red field of fight,” reluctantly returning to Calcutta,

as he told the company at a farewell dinner party given to him by the Commander-in-Chief, on business the nature of which he did not tell, and which may therefore be taken to be nothing more than the every-day hum-drummery of government, which might be very well left to men born to wear heads without troubling one intended only to bear arms. He is generally expected here on the 26th instant, but it is not improbable he may delay his appearance until the 28th, the second anniversary of his arrival in Calcutta. It is hardly worth while to spare a line to say what he has yet done for India: a word indeed would tell the whole truth; but here, as elsewhere, to tell the truth of a great man is to abuse him with those little creatures that crawl about him between their earthly hopes and the heaven of his smiles. Yet let the word be written: **NOTHING**:—the world will indorse it. Gwalior is settled; that is, being very unsettled it is left to itself, and his Lordship has thus time to turn his attention from the little boy there to the little boy in the Punjab—which he is doing without affecting to have an eye in that direction. There are rumours, almost incredible of any body else, that he has virtually promised a little more fighting next

cold weather, and you may rely upon it if there can be any thing of the sort there will be, and that he'll be there to see. We heard the other day that Dhuleep Singh had been kindly spared the misery of living, but his removal has turned out to be untrue : it remains a thing yet to be told. Heera Singh, the Vuzeer, holds his position by virtue of the devil that befriends all violence, and sanctifies wrong for this world—GOLD.● As I have before said our interference is only a question of time, and events have not tended to put it off since the wholesale massacres which accompanied the late revolt. But why should Lord Ellenborough hint that his quarry is under him and that he will presently strike ! It is hardly decent, but it is the man. The *Calcutta Star* observed the other day—"His Lordship seems to arrange for a sort of shooting season every year as the weather becomes cool, and looks forward, as does an English hereditary legislator to the 12th of August or the 1st of September, to his pleasant winter's campaign. One year he goes out and bags so many brace of Bhonslas, the next he looks to secure some leash or so of Lahorces, and asks his particular friends in anticipation to be of the party. This is sporting on a grand scale : but what is it sporting

with?” It is sporting with—but as Virginius says—

“ I had forgot ; the fashion of my speech
May not please——”

so I will be no more explicit than the Journalist.

I dare say you have often heard that nothing can be done in Calcutta without a party. The one that was not paid to his Lordship before he left is again talked of, and there are whispers of a break-down in an attempt to get up another Military entertainment ; but these things are never intended to be heard of unless they end in supper and champagne. I really hope the Civil affair may come off as the first thing of the sort, and because a speech from his Lordship is cheap at the price of a ticket. I write in all sincerity for he shines in this line, and one does not care much about the matter so that it is amusing for the moment. The Fancy Ball to Lady Nott was a very successful affair, numbering about 600 persons. Sir William made a speech on his health being proposed, for which I must refer you to the papers, you will see that he alluded to *some one* to whom justice has not yet been done *in ré* Afghanistan, and who is content to bide his time. He is himself the man ; there can be no question about it. The General and family left for the

Cape of Good Hope by the *Hardwicke* on the 6th instant. He has two years' leave of absence—but I shall be much surprised if he be not back in harness in half the time—at any rate at his post. May he live to deserve more honours—and get them.

Having touched on dancing, I must quote from the *Star* a passage there anent with some comments on Calcutta Society, introduced in a notice of a volume by Mons. Theroulde, entitled “*Travels in India in 1838-9-40.*”

“The Society of Calcutta is very numerous,” says Mons. Theroulde, “and very gay. When the Governor is resident, he sees company in the evening every week.” (This was written of Calcutta four or five years ago before the reign of physical force.) “There is a great deal of dancing goes on,—indeed a taste for this amusement is general with the English throughout India. They term it *the recreation of the French*, little suspecting that many among them, reference being had to their age and the position they occupy, would be esteemed almost ridiculous among us from their passion for the dance.” This is severe, certainly, and it is true, always supposing that the same persons would have recourse to the same sort of amusement in Europe as in India, but as

the supposition is incorrect Mons. Theroulde's castigation of our *danso-manie* by comparison with European habits falls to the ground. People in India dance, because they can do nothing else. There is small choice of topics for general conversation in Society, and perhaps not that amount of general intelligence which could avail itself to the utmost of those that do exist. Our more serious social re-unions are solemn mutton-eatings, and sedate imbibition of claret: our gayer ones are dependent on a fiddle and iced cream. The rich and quiet members of the community take a turkey-and-ham view of their lighter social obligations; the more mercurial look on them through the medium of a Town Hall transparency. The question is not—"Have I improved my acquaintance with A or B by conversation, unrestricted intercourse, or a general desire to cultivate a knowledge of his character?"—but, "Has A or B. dined with me,—have we sat at the same table, and shared the same bottle of champagne,—have we eyed the same greasy succession of uneatable side-dishes, and masticated ill-cut wedges from the breast of the same turkey?" If such be the case, the co-bibbers of the bottle, and co-masticators of the bird have fulfilled their duties as friendly, pleasant, agree-

able people. Again, a younger man does not say, "Do I know Mrs. C. or D?" If he has performed a certain dreary series of melancholy saltations to the sound of a band—the sweetest tones of which would drive Musard distracted,—or if he has lugubriously gyrated through what they call a waltz here (which we believe is a species of dance invented by the milliners for the better tearing of flounces), then he is at liberty to speak of her as "nice," or "dashing," or "intelligent," or "well informed," as the case may (or may not) be: the dance is all in all. We ride through the round of social duty on a saddle of mutton, or sliding from this greasy and more solemn intercourse, cultivate the pleasure of intellectual society in a glissade.

Mons. Theroulde would however find that the most determined of our mutton-eaters, transported into a more wholesomely constituted society, would often turn out a cheerful, easy-mannered, agreeable man; while those dancers,

" Whose wily turn, and desperate bound
Will baffle music's sweetest sound,"

subsiding into their proper places, would dream as soon of asking for an engagement "for the next quadrille" as of seeking for one in the nearest *corps de ballet*."

I extract this because it is substantially true, though dashed off with a free hand. But I must hurry on, or leave several things unsaid worthy a word or two: they will get little more.

It has transpired since the arrival of the last Mail—though your papers gave no hint of it—that the home government is prepared to stand by Lord Ellenborough bravely in the Scinde business. I confess I shall be surprised if anything like the unanimous support of the party can be obtained for it. As part of the rumour, we heard that the Ameers were to be brought here, and about this there is probably no mistake, as accommodations are being prepared by the Government at Baraset, the head quarters of a Joint Magistrate and Collector of a small district, and formerly the site of the Cadet barracks: it is about fourteen miles from Calcutta. Lord Ellenborough has never yet ventured on any remarkable flourish about Scinde—he simply declared it “a Province of the British Empire” and there was an end of it;—but if it be true that the people at home are going to give him an opportunity of writing or speaking on the subject, we shall have something better even than the *Star's* account of that speech at Gwalior to which I have before alluded, and which is duly chronicled in the

Overland. One passage only I will introduce here! “Brethren,—Shall I say brethren of the sword? (yes, yes!) Shall I say brethren in arms? [ecstatic cheering prolonged for several minutes.] Yes, I feel those applauses in the core of my inmost heart. I ought to have been a soldier; I felt I ought to have been so when in company with Lady Gough and the tea-things. I went to a place where I had no business to be in, about a business of which I had no real conception [oh!]” A Madras paper says that it presumes “oh” was meant to signify that the Governor-General was a cypher throughout the whole affair;—but this is not half so severe as what is reported to have been said by an Officer of high rank, who when he heard his Lordship was bent on crossing the Chumbul, spoke of the probability of there being the devil to pay with such a *Brummagem Napoleon* in the field. This however partakes of personality, and is very much to be reprehended.

We have little news from Scinde, but happily the sickness among our troops is less than it has been. Sir Robert Sale however has caught a fever at Sukkur and is proceeding to Europe.

It is stated by the *Star* that a servant of Colonel Stoddart's had arrived at Sukkur from Bo-

khara, with the intelligence that his master was alive, but that he had witnessed the execution of Captain Conolly. Whether this be true remains to be seen, but that the man there arrived and so delivered himself is certain.

From China we have nothing of particular interest.

I dwelt a little in my last on the very gross attack that had been made by the *Englishman* on the late Major Eldred Pottinger. I believe there is hardly a paper in India that has not expressed its indignation at this conduct—and it is indicative of the strong feeling entertained on the subject that the journals ordinarily the most temperate have written the most strongly. A meeting has been held in Bombay, and a subscription opened, limited in amount of individual payments, for the purpose of erecting some tribute to the memory of the man thus maligned.

There are several matters of local interest for me to touch on. In the first place there has been a half-yearly meeting of the Shareholders of the Union Bank since I wrote last, and instead of squabblings and general distrust things went as merry as a marriage-bell, and people pocketed their dividend at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum, and agreed they had nothing to fear for the

future—nor have they, unless an exploded system which it is no use to characterize be reverted to. It is now admitted that the probable loss to the Bank on two failures will be in round numbers £100,000, and of this more than £80,000 may be set down to one of them—in other words this money was lent without any sufficient security. The great and just outcry against this Establishment was, that it was deeply engaged in transactions which could not by the most liberal construction be held consistent with Banking business—and though at the time there were not wanting those who defended it, and maintained it was not only profitable but safe, they have either altered their opinions or tacitly succumbed to the other view. At the end of the year 1842 out of a capital of £1,000,000, upwards of £620,000 were invested in security of Indigo, and mortgages of the concerns! In twelve months we find it decreased to less than £400,000, and are assured that not a single loan has been granted for the Indigo cultivation of this season, except in those cases in which factories had virtually become the property of the Bank as holder of mortgages from Insolvent Estates. This has tended to restore confidence, as a matter of course, and shares (Rs. 1,000 each) that were for sometime at a discount have

risen to a premium of from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. Mr. James Calder Stewart, formerly of the Bombay firm of Remington and Co. has been appointed Secretary in the place of Mr. G. J. Gordon, recently returned to England.

I have mentioned on one or two occasions the subject of Inland Steam Navigation, and the arrival in this country of an Engineer (Mr. Robinson) on behalf, as we understood, of parties at home willing to embark in the undertaking if they should receive such a report as might be satisfactory. Mr. Robinson is now I believe on his way back to Calcutta, having surveyed the river to Allahabad with sufficient care to have satisfied himself that there are no impediments to the navigation of the first class River Steamers, very fine drawings of which he brought out with him. In the meantime other parties have stepped into the field, the Steam Tug Association, who talk about a profit of 22 per cent on the undertaking, showing how the Government Boats have paid 12 per cent. but not explaining how they are to come within a trifle of doubling it. The Association propose that the old affair and the new shall be called the "India General Steam Navigation Company," and that the Capital shall be 20 lakhs of rupees divided into 2,000 shares of

Rupees 1,000 each. As an inducement to the public to come forward, it is said that they will “be assured of a dividend on their shares being regularly received from the day of their first instalments being paid”—this of course out of the profits of the Tuggery—but there is an apparent generosity in this on the part of the Proprietors of that concern which is not fully appreciated. There is I think a strong feeling that the great cause of Inland Steam Navigation—not a whit less important to this country than rapid communication with Europe,—nay infinitely more so,—will hardly be served by being tacked on to the comparatively small, though valuable Company which tows our merchant vessels to and from the Sand-Heads at the small charge of £40 per day. There is, too, a feeling that it would be not only more prudent but more fair to see what others are inclined to do for a cause which has been thought of seriously at home while people were sleeping upon it here. There is, moreover, a very strong suspicion that the junction cannot legally be effected, or rather that the character of the present Company cannot be arbitrarily changed, though this difficulty would not appear to have occurred to the movers. Under all these circumstances,

it is very doubtful whether the design will not miscarry, and I hope that those at home who have been thinking about it will be prepared to act when Mr. Robinson's report shall reach them, which ought to be very soon. I believe a very considerable amount of capital would be forthcoming in Calcutta alone—though not a tithe of what would once have poured in, for somehow or other people have got as suspicious as if this place were not the very beau ideal of a Commercial Utopia.

Another matter of much importance is the Indian Wheat question. It is some few months since I mentioned that the Agricultural Society had appointed a Committee to enquire into all matters connected with the growth of wheat in this country; soils, their capability, the cost of production, rates at which it might be shipped from Calcutta, &c. &c. A series of questions were prepared and sent to such parties in different districts as were most likely to supply the fullest answers, and much valuable information has thus been collected. The capability of the wheat countries is, so to say, unbounded, and some of the finest may be said to be in the vicinity of Calcutta. Beyond Behar it is possible that the ex-

pense of transit at present would be too heavy to render it desirable to bring down grain for exportation, besides which it seems that the cost of cultivation is very much heavier higher up the country. Were then a large trade in wheat to be established from this country our supplies would probably be drawn from the Eastward and Southward of Patna. This we could land in Calcutta for from Rs. 1 to Rs. 1-12 per maund (80 lbs.) which would yield the grower a profit of 37 per cent. There has long been a belief that wheat cannot be exported without suffering serious injury from the weevil, (*Calanaria granaria*) but the experience of men who have had the best possible opportunities of testing this has proved it to be fallacious; flour in very considerable quantities has been, and is, being sent from this to London, Liverpool, &c. and I have the assurance of the shippers that properly cleaned it may be landed in as good condition as the day it was put on board; nay, that it has been re-shipped for this port as an experiment and found to be uninjured after eighteen months. The Committee's Report has not been finally presented to the Society, but at the Monthly meeting the other day it was determined to call a

special meeting to receive it, that in the event of it embodying a recommendation to address the Home Government in favour of the same advantages being extended to wheat of Indian growth as was recently bestowed on that of Canada, the same may be done by the next mail. It was in consequence of this substantive proposition being made to the Society that the Wheat Committee was appointed.

Still another matter of heavy business. The Indian Journals have been discussing the question of newspaper postage, and have instructed Lord Ellenborough that if he would condescend to consider the possibility of its reduction he would be securing popularity at a cheap price, and a name that would survive his rule. It is seven years since a Commission of Enquiry sat on the subject: very important reductions were then made, and we think like results might follow a like investigation. The postage is very heavy, as you will admit when I tell you that for any distance over 400 miles it is $4\frac{1}{2}d$. This on the daily paper in the Monthly edition of which these letters appear, is very considerably more than its prime cost, and if the weight allowed at this rate is exceeded but

by a feather the $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ becomes $9d.$ All we ask is that the Government should consider the subject, and if the loss to them by a reduction of, say even a third, should appear short of ruinous, they would be pleased to incur it in one of the best of causes. We are always moderate in our demands here, or we ought to say that one anna ($1\frac{1}{2}d.$) is as much as should be charged, and that the deficiency in the revenue, which there would be for some time, might be put down as a legitimate item in the cost of enlightened government. If there is one honest and independent man among the Board of Directors he will befriend the Press in this matter—but Lord Ellenborough is such an eccentric person that I, should not be surprised at his doing the handsome thing without any further hint, just because he knows people set him down as the very last man to listen to a word in favour of the Fourth Estate.

I must break off for my time runs short, and I am looking for news from the *Bentinck*, which was semaphored this morning and is likely to be at her moorings very shortly. She left Suez on the 25th ultimo, and has therefore made a very capital passage—under the time we set

down in our memorial as the average between this and the Isthmus. The O. P. Company will be more puzzled than ever to make out that they can expedite the "Indian Mails" by carrying those of Madras and Calcutta to Bombay. The *Hindustan's* last voyage was a splendid run to Suez—I think it was only 22 days. She was unlucky the other day, for going down the river she grounded on the *James and Mary* Shoal, and remained there for six-and-thirty hours. She is said to have suffered no injury, and went to sea on the 16th instant. She has about 100 passengers on board. At the time of the accident they were going slowly and taking the soundings from a vessel ahead: she gave them 3 fathoms, and going over the ground where that cast was taken she struck: her draught of water was 17 feet. Among her passengers is Mr. James Vining, who came out here about four months ago to assume the managership of our Theatre. I presume he was disappointed in his expectations—and if this be so, though theatrical affairs are not in the highest feather with us any more than with you, I should imagine he must have been considerably misled at home. There was some rather unpleasant correspondence in the papers just before his departure,

originating with some very injudicious person who complained that Mr. Vining had been kept in the back-ground by the Amateurs, and that the indifferent Houses were the consequence. It was necessary to expose this, and the facts were shown to be that the theatre had been open during his stay thirteen times for English performance—that he had played nine times, and seven out of the nine the principal character in the several pieces. You will see a letter addressed to the Editor of the *Calcutta Star* by Mr. V. the day before he left us. He is very much regretted, and as an actor, manager and gentleman, it is not probable we shall see his like again.

I have this moment heard (4 p. m.) that the Steamer was at Garden Reach at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3, having been 66 hours from Madras to the Pilot Vessel and 5 hours and 6 minutes from Kedgerree—say about 80 miles as she would steam : she brings 50 passengers, and intelligence to the 6th ult. A melancholy occurrence happened on the Steamer's passage from Madras. A Mr. Butt, who came out to this country as Surgeon of a Ship about twelve or fifteen months ago, and who was till lately House Surgeon of the Howrah Seaman's Hospital, was missed, but not until some hours

after he had been last seen. Mr. B. left this last month as Surgeon of the *Samuel Boddington*, bound to London, and was landed at Madras, his mind being affected. Farewell,—the *London Mail* is just put into my hands.

Believe me,

My dear Squab,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, March 20th, 1844.

MY DEAR MACKENZIE,

It is a long time since I wrote you last, and much longer since I heard from you. In the first of these Letters I invited you to send me matter for publication, and as you have not done so I shall make no apology. To tell you the truth, my reason for addressing you now is that you were among those who, though differing essentially from the political opinions of our present Governor-General, thought he was a fit man for the office to which he was appointed, and that he would govern this country with credit to himself and benefit to its people. He has now been here two years, and as I have asked in vain of his Eastern admirers what he has done for India? perhaps at your convenience you will sit down and tell me, or frankly own you were mistaken in the man. This is a good, easy world,—particularly for quacks. A man has but to assume a

little to be trusted a great deal ; bottle-conjuring is just as profitable a hoax as it ever was. Let a man call himself what he will, there are fools who believe his merit and his mission, and he flourishes his season ere he be found out as famously as though he were the genuine thing. Lord Ellenborough dubbed himself the FRIEND OF THE ARMY, and he has contrived to prove it at last by having a portion of every branch of it in a state of mutiny. I apprehend this country has never been in so ticklish a position since we held it as during the past month, and we have as yet no assurance that the danger is over. I do not propose to re-write the history of this outbreak ; you will find it at length in the Military Summary of the month in the *Overland Star*, and I believe you will not have any difficulty in understanding the merits of the question. You will see that for the sake of a paltry economy an allowance was given to our troops in Scinde to which they were not entitled, while one which might have been granted without violating any principle, or rule of the service, was withheld. They had been receiving extra batta and ration money, and when affairs had assumed an appearance of tranquillity, retrenchments were to be made. Batta they could only strictly claim when

marching, or in the field ; ration money is an open question in the discretion of the Government—that is, there is no arbitrary rule against it, even when troops are in Cantonments. The troops desired to have the latter, content to resign the former, but, a fig for rules, the extra batta was the cheaper for Government, so that was continued and the other taken away. About three months ago the Government issued an order, but not in the *Gazette*, that the extra batta should be stopped also, on the very ground that should have prevented its being granted, and the ration money which as I have said might, and should have been allowed, was not given in its place. When the 64th N. I. was ordered to Scinde they would not stir until the obnoxious order was rescinded : the 4th, 34th and 69th N. I. the 7th Light Cavalry, the 6th Irregular Cavalry, the 4th Troop 1st Brigade of Horse Artillery (Natives) and the 4th Company 6th Battalion of Foot Artillery (also Natives) followed their example. This spirit is not confined to our Presidency. The Madras 47th N. I. who were under orders for Kurrachee, refused to embark except on extra allowances, which were conceded. This concession was regarded as most ill-advised by the Supreme Government, and despatches were forwarded to Bombay inti-

mating that the regiment was not to proceed to Scinde, but do duty in that Presidency, and that the batta would therefore be disallowed. When they landed they were in a state of mutiny. Their argument is this :—You granted extra batta and ration allowance before we left our Presidency, and all our pay-orders for the support of our families have been given on the strength of it. We are ready to go to Scinde if you please, but if you keep us here you must also keep your terms with us.

This is a pretty state of things: the troops are not to be defended in the course they pursued, yet apart from strict military discipline there is everything to be said in their favour. It might have been wrong to yield to the 47th in the first instance; but it was a smaller evil to submit than to risk the consequences of revoking a contract, or breaking it in spirit. The regiment is taken from home to do duty in Scinde on certain terms: these terms are disapproved of by the Governor-General, and he says—they shall not go to Scinde, so will they not be entitled to their allowances: and what has it come to? What would have been the concession to this one regiment compared to the concession that has been made since? Lord Ellenborough has recently been boasting in pub-

lie that he has always beaten down opposition and always will beat it down, and this in the very face of a General Order extending to all the Presidencies, not restoring what had been taken away—not giving that in lieu which was asked for, but yielding both!—the economy that was to be, results in an expenditure that never need have been, and the Government is open to the suspicion of having succumbed to the army because it dared not stand by its former decision. It has acted wisely, but how much wiser had it been to have avoided this humiliation, not to say this necessity for a most dangerous precedent. The Government felt the very serious position in which it was placed. Sir William Casement, the Military Member of Council, was stopped the very day he was to have embarked for England—and very properly, as he enjoys the credit of having advised the course that has been followed throughout. And now the question remains, what is to be done with these refractory regiments—I believe only better known to be so than some others, because they, only, have been under orders to move. There are very good reasons for supposing that the spirit had widely spread, and indeed had it not been so believed the duty of the Government would have obviously been to order other regi-

ments to Scinde before it yielded one iota of its dignity, or dreamt of repairing a false step in the face of mutiny, subject as it necessarily must be to the suspicion of having been intimidated. But what is to be done by way of punishment? There are those who talk about decimating, and shooting them, but as a very calm and able man observed the other day, the worst of the remedy is, that if it does not succeed in the first instance it cannot be repeated. Others would disband them, a questionable punishment after all, and it is by no means certain that the army at large would permit any such affront as this to be passed upon it, for here you will see is no case of ill conduct in the field. Men are to be punished for having been in the right and enforcing their right in a wrong way. The Government has confessed its error, and any severe measure would look like vindictiveness at having itself been in the wrong. It is matter of common conversation that the European troops have felt with the Sipahis in this late affair, and here is another matter not to be lightly overlooked. At the present moment we know not what may be the exact state of the case. I mean what may have occurred before the concession order shall have been promulgated. The FRIEND OF THE ARMY begins by giving the troops sweet-

meats ; what he will end with, remains to be seen ; intermediately we have a mutiny. Scinde wants troops, Scinde our new province, and as far as we have been able to judge not a regiment will leave its Presidency.

I mentioned in my last that His Lordship would probably make his appearance here on the 28th ultimo : he did so, and was received on the steps of Government House by the Military, a number of members of the Civil Service who had received invitations to attend, and a few stragglers. It is said he expected to have been welcomed with great enthusiasm as returning "from the wars, from the red field of fight," and that the absence of every public demonstration accounted for his bowing once or twice and then disappearing, leaving the select company to get into their vehicles and take their departure. A very ill-advised attempt was made to get up an Address; it certainly succeeded after a fashion, but the whole affair has been supremely ridiculous, and in every respect the reverse of complimentary. Only 40 persons signed the requisition to the Sheriff, and of these but two were Civilians. Not more than 70 of all classes (4 Civilians) attended the meeting in the Town Hall, and it was not till an hour after

the time of call that even these were got together. Then there was a delay in procuring a seconder for the Address, and a proposition that it should be signed by the Sheriff on the part of the inhabitants was defeated by an amendment that it should lie on the table for a week, that the inhabitants might sign for themselves. At the end of the week it had received only about 270 signatures, so it was allowed to remain there a week longer, and by dint of a good deal of trouble the number was increased to about 450, but it has not been deemed prudent to give them publication, though it was promised. A greater failure never was known in Calcutta. The requisition to the Sheriff for a meeting on the Steam question speedily received more than 1,400 signatures. On the 5th of this month, the Sheriff accompanied by a small party went up to present the Address, which ran as follows :—

MY LORD,—We, the undersigned Inhabitants of Calcutta, beg to present our hearty congratulations on your Lordship's return to the Presidency, after the accomplishment of the great objects that called you hence to Upper-Hindoostan. That those objects should have been so promptly and so triumphantly attained is a matter of national concernment; to us it is doubly gratifying, in as much as it enables your Lordship to direct the energies of a powerful

mind towards the measures of internal benefit,—second only in real importance, to those affecting political security.

The presence of the head of this Colonial Empire, at the seat of Government, is so essential in every way to its prosperity, as to make it but natural that we should bear even his necessary absence with something like impatience, and hail his return with the warmest expression of satisfaction. That your Lordship's residence amongst us may be continued—that no State emergency may again demand your personal care in other parts of this wide Territory, must always be our earnest desire. It will be our study to make that residence, as much a matter of choice, as it is of public expediency.

We have, &c.

If any Address short of one telling the whole truth could have induced people to sign, it would have been the above, for you will see it inculcates pretty strongly the duties the Governor-General is felt to have neglected—all those that belong to the Civil government of the country. The answer was a written one, which shows, as his Lordship does not read the papers, that some one must have anticipated the Sheriff. His Lordship read this reply :—

GENTLEMEN,—I thank you for your congratulation on my return to the Presidency, after the accomplishment of the great objects, which the courage and discipline of the Army have enabled me so promptly to effect.

It will be most gratifying to me, should the state of India permit me to prolong my residence amongst you in this city, which must ever possess so much of intrinsic importance as the Commercial Capital of Bengal; but it is necessary that the Head of the Government should place himself wherever his presence may at the time appear to be calculated to produce most benefit to the general interests of the empire; and I must never allow any personal consideration to interfere with the performance of this public duty.

I assure you, however, that the friendliness of the expressions with which you have now welcomed my return, will tend much to increase my regret, should I be again compelled to leave you.

The expression in the above, "*Commercial Capital of Bengal*" as applied to Calcutta, the Capital of British India as we have been accustomed to hear it called, is not supposed to have been accidental.

You will remember the invitation to a Ball and Supper which his Lordship accepted some months ago without naming a day, and put off from time to time till he went up the country. The broad hint he gave would not be taken by all concerned, though some understood it and withdrew. Others were determined it should not be a flash in the pan, so up they went, and as there was no longer a loop-hole the Governor-

General fixed the 14th instant. This was a twin abortion—only 130 persons in the whole of Calcutta and its suburbs could be found to subscribe to it, and 600 invitations were issued. Here is the speech that was made by the President of the evening after supper :—

“ Mr. Prinsep after having proposed “ the Queen,” which was drank with rapturous applause, gave the health of the illustrious guest Lord Ellenborough. Mr. Prinsep prefaced the toast with some eulogistic observations on his Lordship, and said that, although this was the first time the Civil part of Society had come forward to do the honor to his Lordship which they now did, he was quite sure his Lordship would not attribute the delay to any want of attachment to the Sovereign, or of personal regard and respect to Her representative. Mr. Prinsep then alluded to the great success that had uniformly attended his Lordship’s measures, and observed that his Lordship was a nobleman of rank, and fortune, and power in England, and had come amongst us solely to benefit the country over which he presided as ruler. His Lordship had like all men in power met with some opposition, but the yelpings which had been raised against him were indicative of the Bull-dog race from which they emanated.”

His Lordship’s reply was not more extraordinary from his matter than his manner: he is described to have been in a state of the greatest excitement, and not a soul who heard him has pretended to know, as far as I have heard, what

he meant by his reiterated declarations that he had put down opposition, and always would put it down. It appears to have been an exceedingly foolish and angry outbreak. It is true he knew how the party had been got up, and that it was not a general thing, for there is little doubt, as the *Calcutta Star* stated, that numbers even of those who did subscribe would have subscribed to a Ball to the Ochterlony Monument, or any thing else for a dance, and that dozens subscribed to the Supper who did not subscribe to the Address; but at the same time if he chose to accept the honour, such as it was, he ought not to have made light of it. Thus "the Government" declared itself:—

"His Lordship in reply, said in substance as follows:—Sir, I thank you for the honor you have done to me in proposing my health, and I thank all those who are present for the cordial manner in which they have responded to your call. It is true what the honorable Chairman has said, I had power and influence in England—there was no measure connected with India in which I did not possess the greatest influence—most people come to this country to make their fortunes—but I came here to do my duty, and because I deemed that *in* India I could be of most service to the country. I have met with opposition, but I have put down all opposition hitherto, and I will beat down all opposition that *may* arise. I am not surprised at the reception I have met with, for the being must be senseless who would not support the Government, and I call on

every man to do so." His Lordship then added,— " I have come amongst you again ; and if those social relations, which are desirable should not exist, the fault will be your's and not mine."

The Press, with the exception of a journal that trims and turns about in such an originally eccentric manner that lacking the respectability of consistency it has not even the cunning to go with the hour, has ridiculed the above nonsense. The *Star* says :—

" We have heard of more than one lady who was rather alarmed at the exhibition, and no wonder, when a friend of remarkable nerve and self-possession could find in describing to us his Lordship's manner, no other parallel than that of Coriolanus addressing the plebeians. The idea of physical force is rife throughout the brief address : no mention is made of the ladies who were present, although so materially aiding in the effect of the compliment paid to the speaker, and certainly the best part of that society assembled to do him honour : nothing prevails in the speech but a republication of eternal I's, and no rhetorical figure is employed beyond the characteristic metaphor of the *voit du fait*. "*I* will break down opposition,—*I* have beaten down opposition : " it is a sort of conjugation of the verb *vapulo*, in all its moods and tenses, but always in the first person. Irritation, imperiousness, and violence are, we regret to say, but too markedly evident in the Address ; and we ask of ourselves—for what ? Why the need of so much fire ?

what is the dreaded "opposition" of which so much is said? Who is there to oppose; or what power, morally speaking, does there exist in India capable of requiring such an exertion of his Lordship's verberative energy to put it down? Is it his Council that he points at?—or,—we are fairly at a loss for a query, let our readers pardon us; the idea of substantial opposition to a Governor-General of India is too absurd for any, but one mind to entertain. Beat down opposition forsooth!—Fiddle-de-dee,—go, beat a drum."

The *Eastern Star* takes up the idea with which this concludes, and says :—

"We have been favoured with some fugitive pieces by an ingenious gentleman who has attempted to strike out an entirely new school of occasional poetry. He says that, whereas prose is often poetry, and *vice versâ*, gentlemen of acute ears are wrong in not availing themselves of any rythmical sentence of some force, and using the same as a saddle for Pegasus. Now as there are various breeds of the winged horse, it is not difficult for a man to capture one of the tamer kind. Let him choose the hack of an Ex-Sonneteer turned out to grass for the summer; or the once fiery steed of some irregular poet, who after bullying his bit of blood to a stand still, lets him down on his knees, and then finding he will not go the pace, dismounts, and leaves him altogether. Poetical nags in the above condition, says our friend, are easily caught by a sievefull of chaff with one rhyme in it to do duty for beans. Amuse Pegasus with this article,

and you may saddle him with your pet sentence, and ride away as follows under a sounding title by way of saddle cloth, like—

LYRICS FROM ORATORICAL TEXTS.

“ I will beat down opposition ”

(*Lord Ellenborough at the Town Hall.*)

“ Beat down opposition forsooth !—Fiddle-de-dee, — go, beat a drum.”

(*Calcutta Star at home.*)

Air.—*Ballinamona—Ora.*

1

From his Club, from Park Lane, and from all he holds dear,
From the sinecure bliss of four thousand a year,—
A martyr to zeal (on but six times the sum)
See Ned, “ the Egregious,” devotedly come !

Like a quack that’s set up for physician,
He’s one nostrum for every condition,
And he’ll “ beat, BEAT down all opposition,”
Pooh, Ned—fiddle-de-dee—beat your drum.

2

Whatever the question no medium he knows,
You ask for an answer, he answers with blows ;
If you whimper out “ Logicise,” he replies “ Lick,”
If you stickle for reasons, he’ll reach you a stick :

His true Statesman’s own anti-attribution,
Making things run without the least hitch on,
Is the cudgel that “ beats opposition”—
Pooh, Ned,—fiddle-de-dee—beat your drum.

3

Oh ! bless'd bastinado ! oh ! mighty rattan,
 Your true moral restraint on intelligent man—
 The dint of the bludgeon lays Truth on her back,
 And if grumblers ask *why*, Neddy answers with

WHACK

'Tis the way to produce true contrition—
 'Tis the check for unwholesome ambition,—
 But while Neddy “beats down opposition,”—
 We say—Bother, Ned—go, beat your drum.—

4

For, *fl*agniloquent Edward, let's only suppose,
 That the ranks of opponents, the lists of your foes
 Are mere phantoms ideal—whence Heaven only knows,
 All impassive to bluster, and scatheless by blows !

Oh ! then for your own sake we petition,
 That your feelings you put a tight twitch on,
 And leave off “beating down opposition,”
 To beat naught but—your dear toy, a drum.

Here says our ingenious friend, we have a very pretty lyric composition appositely produced, in connection with it's subject, at the smallest expense of brains. But the thing is done even more easily than in the above style, and the effect of such easy rhymes married to popular melodies may be calculated as immense as in the oratorical lyric next ensuing.

“Honour—Lordship—delay—Sovereign—respect—representative—success—measures—bull-dog—growl.”

(*Mr. C. Prinsep's address to Lord E.*)

Air—*Nora Creena.*

Come, your Lordship, come away,—
 See now Spence's lights are gleaming.—
 Though there's been a slight delay,
 Oh ! believe us, 'tis but seeming !
 Come, nor think our Civil Ball,
 Spite it's twice-made fruitless tentative,
 Hints at disrespect at all
 To the Queen,—or her representative !
 Come your Lordship, &c. &c. &c.

2.

We admire the great success,
 That still crowns your Lordship's measures ;
 You, the mild Beloochees bless,—
 Gwalior yields to you her treasures :
 Smile on us, and fail to heed
 Yelps, and barks, and snarls, and howling,—
 'Tis the British *Cynic's* breed,—
 Bull-dog pups that still are growling.
 Come, my Lord. and let the Hall
 Ring with cheers of adulation,—
 Grace, oh ! grace our Civil Ball,
 Filled for *you* by invitation !—

Nothing, observes our friend, can be more simply elegant than the terseness of these little stanzas, which give the whole of Mr. C. Prinsep's speech with a graphic effect of peculiar happiness. He is somewhat of an enthusiast, and has some strange ideas of "a theory of rythmical stenography," as he calls it, and wild dreams about "expressing the ideality of sound." As upon both

these subjects he is perfectly unintelligible we requested explanation by an instance which he offered to give by another Lyric,—but we begged him to excuse us.”

Why do I insert such trifles as these ? Because you write at home, and may for all I know hear from this, about Lord Ellenborough being pursued with rancorous hostility, whereas we gravely reprove, and laugh too when the subject will permit us to do so.

Lord Ellenborough appears to be haunted by a raw-head-and-bloody-bones which he terms Opposition, and it would seem that it has been dogging him about the best part of his life. Who does not recollect Haji Baba in England delighted at learning that the King's Ministers had obtained “a great victory over a certain turbulent enemy called Opposition,” but respecting whom, (he being invisible) the wily Persian was soon led to entertain apocryphal doubts, so great as eventually to induce him to conclude that English Ministers were as vain-glorious (to say the least) as Persian Vuzeers !

The Lord's “Opposition” is somewhat less real than that of the King's (or Queen's) Ministers, yet he folds his arms on his brawny chest and butts at it even in a convivial party. No one is able to suggest where, or what it is. It has

been surmised that it may be his Council, but surely a man of the Governor-General's sagacity would not betray himself on such an occasion. Then *where is the opposition?* The *Englishman* reports him to have said "he was well assured of the loyalty of the British in India, and of their attachment to him, and he did not believe there was an individual to be found, who doubted that the safety and the supremacy of the English depended on their union." The *Calcutta Star*, you have seen, reports him on this point as follows—"I am not surprised at the reception I have met with, for the being must be senseless who would not support the Government, and I call on every man to do so," and another correspondent of the same journal tells us that he said—he was "much gratified by the assurance of their loyalty, of which, however, he had never doubted; that fortunately Society was so constituted here that politics did not interfere with it, and he hoped that would ever be the case." Then *where is the opposition* that he is to beat down? It is not the Press, because he knows nothing about that, and if he did, how can he beat down the expression of it's opinion; all he can do is to alter it. Applied to the Press it would be nonsense, and an idle boast,—then *where is the opposition?*

Until this be answered no possible meaning can be attached to the words, other than that the opposition he will beat down is public opinion. He may have an idea that it is not favourable to his measures, and he may mean he does not care a fig whether it be or not—and the beating down may only be another expression for turning up his nose—this is consistent with his telling people he was satisfied of their attachment to him, and speaking passionately all the time. One looks back in vain for what opposition he has beaten down. It is found in no part of his public career at home, where he has beat, and been beaten with his party the same as any other man. He beat down no opposition, but succumbed to it, when Generals Nott and Pollock would not evacuate Afghanistan; he beat down no opposition, but succumbed to it, when he left the Somnauth Gates in the Dewan-i-âm at Agra, and he has certainly beaten down no opposition, but wisely succumbed to it, in the military disorganization that has been recently threatening the country.

When you hear of the personalities of the Indian Press have the goodness to look at your own.

The *Examiner* has called Lord Ellenborough an "egregious Governor-General," and egregi-

ous it is very well known is never prefixed to qualify any very flattering noun; in fact it necessarily involves a very strong personality. The *Chronicle* some time since called Lord E. a something coxcomb, and the *Sunday Times* now calls him simply a coxcomb, and other journals have other epithets, for the most part better chosen; a worse, in the present day, could not well be. Now, certainly the worst personality the *Star* has been guilty of was styling him The Lord of Lollipops, a pardonable pleasantry if not a happy one, and if happy more than pardonable. To any person conversant with the Press at home and its manner of dealing with men politically distasteful, complaints of personality in the Press here must appear the last degree of querulousness: this is no justification of an impropriety, but it is an answer to the charge that Calcutta virulence is excessive. Were it worth while it would be no difficult matter to instance party personalities of the grossest description, levelled against obnoxious men by prints of the highest reputation—persevered in at the present day, though perhaps not to the same extent as formerly. What have the grey-headed Liberals of 1844 had to submit to for the last 20 years? And now that the vast majority of newspapers are liberal, what

have not the advocates of the good old times to grin and bear? Why, it would be hardly possible to take up a single paper that professes to discuss public men and public measures, and not find more personality in it's columns than shall be found in all the papers in India in twelve months. And if we look to the character given to measures—by which imputations are made on bodies of men rather than on individuals—we shall find a spirit of defamation rife which is utterly unknown in this country. When an admirer of Lord Ellenborough is driven to cry out that his Lordship is pursued with rancour, he tells every one who is conversant with India that the libel is on the Press, for there is no party spirit here to breed those animosities which, chiefly I believe for party purposes, break out in the shape of personal attack. And this description of attack is so well understood that no one attaches the slightest importance to it. Occasionally a printer is summoned to the Bar of the House for a breach of privilege : for a moment one actor has the stage to himself and a solemn farce is played ; the gentleman affecting an indignation which would never have troubled him had twice as much been said at his expense, not arising out of Parliamentary proceedings and therefore not within the cognizance of the House.

Whoever heard it said that even Lord Castlereagh was pursued with rancour, though as a Minister no one was ever more unpopular, nay, more cordially detested by those not looking for benefits at his hands? Yet he was subject to every description of attack from the bitterest phillipic to the most stinging pasquinade. Whoever heard it said that Lord Melbourne was pursued with bitter and unrelenting hostility, though we know how he was baited even as a private individual? Nobody, because all these attacks were the attacks of party. Here there is no party, and were any attacks personal—that is personal beyond the limits of fair ridicule—the public would not endure them for a moment. It is just this absence of all justification for personal attack (however worthless that justification ought to be held) that makes the Press of this Country more respectable in its treatment of public men, and their measures, than the Press at home.

But it is to be hoped we are not to be deprived of our joke in this free and happy land, whither we come to make our fortunes, but whence we *coolly* don't allow the natives to go to earn a living. Let the Government once be roused to monopolize the privilege of making people laugh

at it, and India will be in danger. Sir Charles Metcalfe will have let loose a monster as pleasant as a sucking dove, left alone, but savage as a bear, with bars before it. It is significant of healthier times here that little people dare laugh at great ones, and cry out if there is any chance of a foolscap being mistaken for the helmet of Minerva. It was not so once, and what is the consequence? Two or three Governors-General have gained statues it is true, but the old lady in Leadenhall street has lost her tea-pot, and only preserved her Service on composition. If she had allowed people to laugh, and grown wise herself, she might possibly still have sat at the head of her own table, confident that her Chair was not a nonentity.

There are solemn wiseacres who cannot forgive a joke, and who give it double effect by wincing under it; poke them in the ribs with your knuckle and they swear you had a knife in your hand; put a feather under some prim old fogey's coat-collar, and they will bear witness they saw you throw oil of vitriol over him. Such are those who have discovered rancorous hostility at work against Lord Ellenborough. As for his measures, they have been generally reprobated—but in no language of undue violence. He set the

example of speaking his mind and it has been fairly followed. But the fact is the offence is in having laughed at his Lordship as well as schooled him. And why not? Wit and satire are winged messengers that will carry argument much further than it could reach without them; they are the bladders that buoy up a heavy subject. Newspapers are not addressed to philosophers but common flesh and blood, grown-up children who will not be instructed unless you amuse them.

I am afraid I shall have wearied you with all this, but if you find it tedious remember the subject. If Lord Ellenborough's popularity is worthy of comment in the great Metropolis we may be pardoned for discussing it in the "Commercial Capital of Bengal," where we know a little more about it. The plain truth in a few words is that no Governor-General was ever more unpopular; he has done nothing, politically speaking, to demand admiration or respect, and his mind has been too much occupied with wars and rumours of wars to think of much else. However well he may mean many regard him as a most dangerous man, and those who do not take the trouble to reflect on his policy have abundant follies to laugh at. How can such a man be popular? I know not what effect the news by this Mail may

have on the people of England, but it is disastrous. What else can it be called when we have a portion of a mercenary army in a state of disorganization, under the direction of a ruler who likens the country to a great camp, and talks of its security being the sword! The doctrine of physical force is a dangerous one to preach to a hundred millions of people. Let us teach them only to fear us for another quarter of a century, and —— need I go on?

The New Steam Company of which I spoke in my last has put forth another prospectus, and published its provisional Board of management, &c. &c. Five hundred shares have been allotted to Europe, the same number to all India, and one thousand to the town of Calcutta,—I like to write modestly after the Lord's contemptuous notice of the place. They appear to cling to the idea of a junction with the Steam Tug Company: though advised it cannot take place they propose the insertion of a clause in their Deed by which it may be done at some future time. This is not looked upon favourably, yet we are told that the shares are being taken very rapidly. Mr. A. De H. Larpent is Chairman, Samuel Smith, Esq., of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Stephenson, who came out some months ago as

Editor of the *Englishman*, Managing Director: the above Journals are warm in their support of the New Company as a matter of course. It would have been very preferable had some scientific and practical men been consulted in the preparations of the plan and prospectus, as to specifications of boats, machinery, &c. &c. It would appear to have been assumed, among other matters, that the tugging of accommodation and cargo boats is preferable to the single steamer, which was not the opinion of Mr. Robinson, whose name I have mentioned in connection with this subject on former occasions.

I touched last month on the exportation of Wheat from this country. A petition has been prepared to Lords and Commons, praying the same advantages as are conceded to Wheat from Canada. It goes home by this Mail, and is entrusted to Lord Auckland and Joseph Hume.

Another document forwarded by this Mail is a Memorial to the Court of Directors from Mr. Staniforth, late Special Commissioner at Cuttack, who was in the first place declared absent without leave some weeks after his leave had been gazetted, and then removed from his appointment to an inferior one under circumstances which are told in a few words. In very ill-health he obtain-

ed a year's leave of absence to proceed to the Hills : on reaching Calcutta the medical men decided that his state required he should go to the Cape for two years, and the Medical Board was of the same opinion. He forwarded the certificate and applied for leave in conformity with it, and the same day (the communications crossing each other) he received an intimation from Government that as his leave had been to the Hills, and he had remained in Calcutta for three weeks, and been seen at the Race Course, it was an abuse of the indulgence granted him, and he was considered absent without leave. This was cutting his month's pay. The certificates of a Presidency Surgeon and the Medical Board however were conclusive, that he had taken immediate advice on his arrival and been prohibited leaving Calcutta except for shipboard. He got 18 months' leave with an intimation that he was not to lose any time in taking his departure. He immediately took his passage in the *Prince of Wales*, advertised to sail in a month or five weeks, the first good passengers' ship that was going direct to the Cape, and by which some intimate friends were proceeding to England. She was detained for some cause or other and Mr. S. was called upon to account for his continuance in

Calcutta. His reasons were declared unsatisfactory and he was degraded. The real history of the case is this. Mr. Staniforth is fond of the Turf and has horses on it: the Races were taking place during the time he was in Calcutta, and the Deputy Governor, whose tastes do not lie that way, chose to impute that he remained only for the purpose of attending them—an assumption the justice of which is unequivocally disproved by the documents sent home—but an assumption which had it been true involves no offence, as Mr. Staniforth has very strongly put it. I do not believe it possible the Court can justify the course the Deputy Governor has pursued; harsh and unjust it would have been under any circumstances, doubly so towards a meritorious officer of very long standing and whose health is seriously broken.

We have no great news this month from China. The spirit of smuggling seems rife, to the disgrace of those engaged in it, but happily Sir Henry Pottinger is not a man to be trifled with, and he has said it shall go hard, but with the unlimited authority he holds he will put it down. It is not to be endured that a mutually profitable commercial intercourse should be endangered by the dishonest cupidity of a few.

The last rumour from the Punjab is that the Seikhs have sent to ask an explanation of what Lord Ellenborough meant by intimating that he should pay them a hostile visit next cold weather, which report would appear to have reached them. He may not have said as much, but his language has been so construed. From Afghanistan we hear of a move made on Peshawur by Mahomed Akhbar Khan, but the particulars are not yet known. The *Delhi Gazette* of the 13th inst., received to-day, mentions having received intelligence to that effect.

Calcutta has been suffering not a little from cholera and small-pox. Mrs. A. Ormonde, who recently joined the theatrical corps here with her husband, died on Sunday night of the former scourge, after an illness of a few hours. Mr. Morrell, a gentleman who built our Theatre and was the mortgagee is another victim, and Monsieur Jame, the leader of the Orchestra, died a week or two back of an affection of the brain.

Here is a long letter ; there is neither time nor necessity to make it longer.

Believe me,

My dear Mackenzie,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, April 19th, 1841.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

For once the Bombay mail has beaten our Steamer, or rather the Express anticipated the *Hindustan*. The former arrived at 5 P. M., of the 16th, the latter was semaphored the same hour of the 17th, but reaching Kedgerree toward the evening, was obliged to anchor for the night. She arrived off her moorings yesterday about 3 o'clock. She started from Suez two days after the *Cleopatra*, and reached Aden 6 hours before her, and would of course have brought us first news, but was detained considerably beyond her usual time at Galle, and had to lie to off Madras some hours before she went in, arriving in the middle of the night. These boats seem to improve every voyage: her run up from Madras to the Pilot was only 66 hours. Yesterday was what we call our latest safe day, and the Express does not leave until the 22nd, so there is a chance

of the majority of letters being answered by return of post, if need be.

And so the Irish trials are over. As a matter of course having been convicted, the defendants have not had a fair trial, and are going "to move." Heaven forbid they should succeed. Tiresomely long and uninteresting, and really promising no good result, a repetition would be insufferable, for Mr. Gun Smith, as the *Examiner* calls the Attorney General, would hardly again divert the monotony of the proceedings.

The idea of enlivening a long trial by shooting a man here and there, would hardly have occurred to any one not an Emerald. He was beyond question wrong in selecting a Counsel on the other side, because that, as a practice, would be calculated to bring justice into contempt. A prisoner, or a defendant, may not be able to retain more than one gentleman in black, and it might interfere with a defence to have to bury the gentleman who was to make it; but the idea, generally, is a good one, and might be carried out to advantage among Counsel on the same side; or the public might not object to all above two Counsel on each side being at liberty to shoot one another to any extent that the dullness of a case might require. The Authorities brought to bear would

perhaps in almost every case in Ireland be of the Police, and the Reports of Pistols : but as Lord Byron talks of the ear becoming “ more Irish and less nice” there is no reason to suppose that it would materially interfere with business. Ball practice might perhaps be eventually extended to the Bench, and any old joker who, like Norbury, was fond of making Counsel his butt, might stand as target by way of having the laughter on both sides. A *capias ad satisfaciendum* would be a capital motion in arrest of judgment, and Counsel who were ready at making it would get into capital criminal business. And why should it not be? there is nothing like uniformity in all matters connected with the law. To challenge a Jury has long been a privilege ; to challenge a Counsel not having been punished must become a precedent ; and it only remains to challenge a Judge. †

Last month when noticing Lord Ellenborough’s after-supper oration, in which he talked of the opposition he had beaten down, and the opposition he intended to beat down, (which was all the opposition that came in his way,) I said he had not beaten it down in the case of the disaffection that had exhibited itself among our troops—but that he had wisely succumbed to it. It was wise to re-

trace a false step, and give those allowances to our soldiers without which they would not proceed to Scinde—because it was not unreasonable that they asked for them; but the *Friend of India* and others now persist that no concession was made, that the order for the prospective stoppage of extra batta was never issued—thus leaving all the disaffection wholly unaccounted for. In the mean time parties are writing from Sukkur whose extra batta had been stopped, of course through the mistake of giving the Order present operation, which perhaps you will think to some small extent corroborative of the opinion expressed by the *Calcutta Star* that such an Order was issued.

But my present object is to say a word or two on another point, the extent to which opposition has been beaten down by the final treatment of the disaffected corps. With the exception of the 34th, disbanded, and some few men who were allowed to take their discharge, the whole are on their way to Scinde. The Government having been wrong in the first instance, could not with any propriety punish with severity, men who repented their unmilitary mode of remonstrance. It was right to believe that with the removal ~~to~~ *the* cause of complaint all cause of complaint was

at an end, and to look lightly over what would have called for serious visitation had there not been original provocation : there was even a politic appearance of leniency and generous confidence in what was really the only course Government could, perhaps it might be said, with safety, pursue. But this wholly rests on the fact of Government having done injustice. If none was perpetrated then has its leniency been misplaced, then has it followed a course open to the most dangerous suspicions. And is not this to be said of its conduct towards such of these regiments as have been more than passively disaffected ? Should no signal punishment have awaited them ? Look at the 47th M. N. I. What opposition has been beaten down with reference to them ? They insist upon terms—those terms are granted ; they mutiny in the ship which is conveying them to their destination ; they land in a state of mutiny ; some few men are sentenced to imprisonment, and the Regiment is sent to Aden to get extra batta ! I name this regiment because its affairs touching this outbreak have all been made public. On this side of India, I might point to at least two regiments which having originally justice and reason with them, and enlisting the sympathy of all who dare

look beyond the obligation of strict discipline, ended by placing themselves in a position in which mercy was flagrant wrong to the army, and dangerous to the State. There are those who refused to march till their grievances, real or imaginary, it matters not for this argument, were redressed, but they were scrupulously obedient to orders, respectful to their officers, and indeed studiously careful to lose nothing of the strong position in which they were entrenched. But this has not been the case with all? In some instances there has been the most gross general insubordination—not only to a contemptuous disregard, but to a threatening of their officers? It is a fact that one regiment, when the officers commanding Companies, acting under orders, sent for their men to their quarters, replied that if there was anything to be said the officers had better come to the Lines, for that not a man would stir! And these Regiments are proceeding on service! Is this beating down opposition; or is it allowing a precedent to go forth, as I said before, injurious to the character of the Army and pregnant with danger to that supremacy which we are told can only be held by the sword. It would not be right to blame Lord Ellenborough or his Council for this—for every hour of danger brings its exi-

gencies, and men must act who are nearest exposed to it—moreover the orders that may be given here may be rendered impossible by the exercise of discretion on the spot, but we have a right to say it illustrates the folly of a man talking as if he were omniscient and ubiquitous. If half that has transpired be true, justice demands that examples should have been made. The 34th has been disbanded, certainly for something more than refusing to go to Scinde ; the visitation then is too heavy or too light. They might under the peculiar circumstances of the constitution of the Native Army and the Native character have refused to march while their allowances were withheld, and yet been good soldiers ; in this case disbandment would have been a punishment, for it would have been felt to be a disgrace : as it is, disbandment is in all probability a premium on disaffection. We should be just in our punishments. Are we so when we disband the 34th, other regiments than whose conduct nothing can have been worse, being allowed to obliterate the past by an expression of willingness to return to discipline. It will not do to talk of opposition having been beaten down in such instances as these—nor in fact in any single instance connected with this extensive military disaffection.

A pretty pass this country is come to, certainly, under the administration of the Friend of the Army, when half a dozen regiments mutiny, and, as we are told, nobody knows why ! a pretty pass, I say, when we recollect it is as a Camp to be kept by the sword ! It is so managed that not a man is punished, and men disaffected to a degree are gone to protect our last new conquest, which no man would wish to see lost with disgrace though won without honour. The gallantry of its actual victors cannot redeem the badness of the cause in which they fought and bled ; with them is a glory all their own, with England a shame that may make her people blush : her mouth is for ever sealed against territorial aggrandizement in others however flagrant.

But I will not do Lord Ellenborough the injustice to suppose for a moment, that if what we have heard of the departure of these troops be true, he will allow them to remain in the service an hour after they can be recalled. I will believe while I may, that the good example of a few, and the receipt of his “ explanatory ” proclamation restored them to discipline and induced them to march forthwith : I will not credit until compelled to do so, that these inducements were insufficient, and that others were added, as is

explicitly stated, either before or after the proclamation was made known : it would be for ever fatal to the reputation of those who yielded, as compromising the authority of the Government, the character of the army, and the very safety of the country.

This Mail has brought a rumour of Lord Ellenborough having been recalled. Had such a thing been dreamed of, I hardly know anything more calculated to help it to reality. It is an opinion entertained by many that this spirit of disaffection is more deeply rooted than has been supposed—that the question of allowances was one which gave an opportunity for its expression, and that it has been silenced, not exercised.

I cannot quit this subject without mentioning the death of Major General Sir William Casement K. C. B. He was detained last month, as I mentioned, in consequence of the unfavourable aspect of affairs. He was just about to embark for England after a very long period of service. He was seized with the Cholera on the 13th inst. and died on the 15th.

The state of affairs at Gwalior is another commentary on Lord Ellenborough's modest declaration, that he had beaten down all opposition.

Utterly indifferent to all experience — though so well read in the modern history of this country—he set up a Council at the seat of his latest triumphs, and before he had got comfortably back to Calcutta, preparations were going on to pull that Regency down; a house divided against itself must fall; the Regency is not worth a year's purchase. Some suspicious characters have been arrested in the Chief Minister's residence. It does not appear very clear, whether his life was to be attempted, but seven out of nine persons have been sentenced to imprisonment for life upon the charge, which indicates sufficiently the peace and order that have been restored by our sagacious policy. The Native opinion is, that Ram Rao Phalkea was at the bottom of all the opposition that was shewn to the British Government, his object being to provoke an interference that might clear his own way; he has succeeded, but the result promises an exposure of how we have been bamboozled: we are told that it is doubtful whether our Resident will be able to keep him in his seat, and the exact influence the Resident possesses may be understood from a case of Suttee that occurred a short time back which he could not prevent, and the boy-battle of Maharajpore, in which the representative of

Ram Rao was treated with such special dignity. The *Friend of India* says,—“Before the recent humiliation inflicted on Gwalior, that state was neutral in our greatest adversities. We have now converted it into a bitter enemy, and may expect opposition whenever the state of our ascendancy appears to be on the wane.” Long before: the opposition is raging now; all the power and influence of the country is said to be at work in undermining the Government we have set up. Let not the Contingent sleep on their arms. All that has been done will have to be done again, and we can only hope it may be with less bloodshed, and to a better end.

The news from the Punjaub is of more bloodshed. Suchet Singh, brother of Golab Singh and uncle of Heera Singh, the present Minister, was induced to approach Lahore in the belief that the troops were so disaffected that they would immediately join his standard, indeed it is said he was invited by them to the capital. In the mean time by lavish gifts Heera Singh secured their temporary adherence, and marching against his uncle, he cut him up and the whole of the principal men of his party.

As far as one may venture on a surmise, I should say, that this successful blow of Heera Singh's is

likely to strengthen his position, and until he is worsted, there will be little chance of our acting supposing that the Government cares to stand aloof till expressly invited to interfere, and which would probably be the case should the present Government, such as it is, be broken up. We saw it mentioned in some paper the other day that the congratulations of our Court on the enthronement of the young Maharajah had been read in Durbar. Heera Singh is then in this position : he has the field open to him to fight it as he best can, and if successful he will secure to himself in fact supreme authority, and should he be worsted he can apply to the Governor-General on behalf of Her Majesty's young "brother." To this it will in all human probability come, but each hour that the Minister holds his own very materially retards that event, and I have small doubt that the occurrence of some decisive disaster to him would not be regarded here among the unfortunate events of the day. In the mean time if what we have heard of the course recently adopted by Heera Singh in connection with our mutinous troops be true, he is fully aware of the critical position in which he is placed, and the importance of standing well with this Government. I allude to certain overtures from the

mutinous among our troops at Ferozepore, the nature of which he is said to have at once made known to our political authorities. It has been discovered that Suchet Singh had no less a sum than 17 lacs of rupees at Ferozepore, of which we appear to have known nothing until application was made for it upon his death. This would be consistent enough with the belief that overtures were made to as well as by our troops: perhaps more of this may be heard hereafter.

We heard the other day of a vessel having been seized by the Chinese in the port of Chang-hai with Opium on board. She was sent down by our authorities to Hong Kong, and has since been liberated on payment of a fine of 500 dollars. This won't do. Unless some very severe penalty, and other than a pecuniary one, is attached to this offence of introducing the drug even into the free ports, the result will be most prejudicial to the interests of legitimate commerce. I see by the March papers that Opium may be stored at Hong Kong on payment of a small duty, and it is said that as no drawback is to be allowed, it is not supposed it will be so stored for exportation. I confess, I do not quite understand what this means; but what it promises is too clear, perpetual sources of mischievous irritation.

The average of Opium at the quarterly sale the other day, was Rs. 1,275 per chest; immediately after the sale it is understood to have fallen considerably, but has now reached as high as Rs. 1,310.

Of purely Indian news the most interesting item is of a commercial character. The Government has passed an Act abolishing at last the Transit or Inland duties in the Madras Presidency. I may extract, as not uninteresting, the following article on the subject from the *Calcutta Star* :—

“ During the viceroyalty of Lord William Bentinck, the first move was made towards the disruption of a very great and general engine of licenced oppression, the Inland Transit duties. The collection of these duties and of the Town duties, their congeners, originated a system of extortion on the part of the native subordinates entrusted with the work, which, even when confined to the exaction of mere perquisites (as they were called) induced no small pecuniary loss, and a great amount of personal annoyance, to travellers and traders. But when, as was very frequently the case, the official felt he could with impunity attempt something more daring, and more profitable than the simple

exaction of a fee,—he scrupled not at either abusing the power of the State to plunder the merchant, or profiting by the bribery of the merchant to cheat the State,—he would deny the correctness of the correctest pass if he saw the bearer were rich, and pressed for time, or he would threaten through his agents, the informers, to search the equipages of the very females of a most respectable native, for smuggled goods until the legal outrage were averted by a timely *douceur*.

This check on trade, as little profitable to Government as it was great in vexations to the governed, was a legacy to us from the native rule which had preceded our's. There was however in their exactions so much more plausibility, as that the State within whose limits the toll was levied, professed to indemnify the trader who had paid it in the event of his meeting with losses by robbery of his merchandises while within it's boundaries. The indemnification was made it is true at the cost of the neighbouring villages, not of the State itself, but it *was* made, and this gave a colour of equity to extortion, and exalted a system of licensed exaction in most instances into (in some) a species of rude insurance. This however was not what

our fiscal system could contemplate ; and the tax was with a Pittite spirit of pertinacity maintained while the indemnity was allowed to slide into extinction. Under Lord William Bentinck Mr. Trevelyan was charged with the duty of primarily investigating the administration of the Transit Duty Laws ; and he, having written to and got reports out of all the Inland Customs Collectors, stuck the best parts of the best reports together, as is usual in such cases, and so made a book, diluting other men's information with his own phrases. This book a number of people said they read.

Among them were the Members of the Customs Committee, gentlemen assembled from the three Presidencies here, which was also a Post Office Committee, and in it's separate, and conjoint capacity proved a very fit prototype in activity for the Law Commission, under the remains of which we now still labour. The Customs Committee however made, thanks to Mr. Trevelyan, a little of Bengal, and the N. W. Provinces, and thanks to Mr. Borrodale something of Bombay, but Madras, where the Transit Duties were awfully severe, and sadly profitable and where the evil was the worst,—they could owing to fiscal difficulties over which they had

no power, do the least with. Now in the midst of much uncertainty, a certain Benthamite Bengal Civilian "upset the coach," as was said of Lord John Russell, by suddenly abolishing in his plenitude of authority as Governor of Agra, all Inland Duties, and making the internal commerce free. It was a great deed for a mere public servant to venture upon, solely and singly responsible for what he did: but it was quite in consonance with the enthusiastic, and somewhat eccentric character of the excellent man who forced that improvement on the land, which others had but talked of. It became necessary that Bengal should follow in the march of that improvement, and in it she has participated with the happiest effect for, now, some ten years.

The Transit duty system, as we have heard it described to us, lately existing in this (benighted) Presidency must have been as oppressive as it is well possible to conceive such a thing ever could be. We have heard of duty levied on the produce of a man's field on it's way to the garner (though this doubtless was some isolated act of oppression,) and we have heard the intersecting lines whereon the duty was collected, compared to a constant iteration, if such could be fancied, throughout the country of a series of fiscal im-

pediments worthy of Austrian austerity, or of the preventiveness of the Piedmontese. But all these rigorous modes of realising revenue were nevertheless productive, and it required a bold man to venture upon throwing up the certainty of public resources in order to gratify his feeling of what was just and due to the country, however sincere his philanthropy, or however ardent his self-devotion.

Lord Ellenborough merits the deepest expression of a people's gratitude for the blessings which his abolition of the Inland Customs has conferred on Southern India. It is a statesmanlike act, which years had gone on prompting the completion of, but which no one dared attempt. We do not doubt, but, that the philanthropic confidence with which the Governor-General has relied in a great measure on the development of the general wealth of the country to make up the deficiency will be substantially justified. The increase of Sea Customs, and the productiveness of the Frontier duties in our own Provinces after the abolition of the Transit dues, sufficiently prove what immense resources are elicited by the unshackling of internal commerce. The Madras Presidency is not in this respect so full of promise as is our's, but there is much to

be looked for. As regards the Salt Revenue scheme we will suspend opinion till we hear more of it;—but we sincerely hope the wise measure above recorded may not be followed up too rashly by any such increase in the Sea Customs “at *all* the Indian Presidencies” as the preamble of the act alludes to.”

Last month’s news mentioned the death of Sir Francis Burdett. You may remember that as long ago as last June I wrote about him, and his political vagaries, and pretty much in the spirit of all I have read since he went down to the little house, in parliamentary language, to wait for the last grand division. It is creditable to the Press that he is spoken of charitably, more in sorrow than in anger, and that those who felt contempt for his political tergiversation have for the most part preferred remembering what he did for the cause of the people, than what he left undone. There can be but little question that he abandoned his party ; for if it be said, as in fact it is said, that he stopped when he considered they had gone far enough, and that he thought to go further was to approach revolution—the reply is simply this ;—as lately as the discussions on the Reform Bill he professed himself prepared to vote for universal suffrage ! It is not perhaps likely ever to be

known to what extent he was influenced by having been passed over by the Whig Ministry, but we may infer that he felt it severely, else wherefore the course he took in lending his assistance to the Conservative party, who felt it was not oversafe to boast of him as an ally, while he was taunted and ridiculed by his former friends, until he may be said to have withdrawn himself altogether from public life. Had too great liberalism alarmed him he might simply have seceded ; but in fact there was no pretence for fear, for Lord John Russell was a Finality man, and he well knew that no Ministry of which his Lordship was a member would be likely to grant too much to popular rights. He fell from the ranks either because he was hurt with his party or tired of marching, perhaps something of both. He was an old man, and though the prestige of rank and character and fortune was still with him, he stood not alone so endowed : it was not as in his early days when the Radical party would to a man have pointed to Burdett as unanswerable evidence that they were not the tag-rag-and-bob-tail they were declared to be. He was one among many who were the men of the people, and as vanity more than feeling had made him—I will not say a patriot, but a public man, his interest and pride in his

position were considerably abated when it was shared by others. He seceded from his party, aye, from the most moderate of them, for he went over to the other camp, and a name that was the rallying word for all the go-ahead men of the Empire became a by-word and a scorn. And so he lingered out his political existence, neither courted by those he adhered to, nor cared for by those he had forsaken, and now he is gone they are superior to reproach. The loss has been wholly his, for he might have died as he long lived the man of the people, and instead of the voice of generous forbearance, might have been heard the expression of a nation's admiration, worthless perhaps to the dead—but still fame. And supposing him when he went over to the Tories to have truly dreaded the power he had helped to awaken, he lived long enough to see how groundless his fears. It is true a Whig Ministry is not in power, but liberal principles have made gigantic strides in the last dozen years, and the Queen is as safe on her throne, and the Constitution as intact as when Cartwright lectured, and Burdett entered the House of Commons as Member for a rotten borough. Heaven knows what we may come to, but taking the most favourable view of his political wheel-about, the Radical Burdett

became an alarmist too soon. Still, with the home writers I say, he did the cause good service in his day, and be his weakness forgiven.

Our Admiral, Sir William Parker, has paid us a visit, and as a matter of course we gave him a public entertainment. When commenting in my last on the Ball to the Governor-General, I said the people here would dance to the honour of the Ochterlony monument. I forget whether I said, if invited ; I ought to have done so. Because on the occasion of the late Ball no invitations were issued, except to the Governor-General, the Hon'ble the Deputy-Governor, the Members of Council, and the Judges, there were not more than 250 persons present ; quite enough for a very pleasant party, but not complimentary with reference to the number ordinarily assembled by public call. If ever there were an occasion on which a compliment was deserved it was this one, for though the entertainment was nominally to the Admiral, it was in fact to the Navy, represented by the officers of two ships of war (the *Cornwallis* and *Dido*) then in our port ; the Navy, which without any very great exaggeration may be said to have done everything in China. It was that arm of the Force that struck terror into the enemy, and brought

them to terms pregnant with incalculable advantages to the British Empire. It might have been expected that every one would rally round the Blue-Jackets : how far it was from being the case the number mentioned as present tells, particularly when we remember the Gough Balls, and are told by the *Englishman* that the Governor-General's party the other evening numbered between eight and nine hundred persons, for which however should be read between four and five. And this last mentioned affair was not a public or general party but a private and particular one, as stated, I believe in answer to many enquiries why this and that person was not invited. By-the-by that invitation-begging is very bad under any circumstances, and worse when one remembers that of the whole population of the city only about 400 persons could be found to sign a complimentary address on his Lordship's return. But to the difference between the attendance at the Gough Balls and the Navy Ball : to Sir Hugh Gough's the Military of Calcutta, Barrackpore and Dum Dum subscribed, to Lady Gough's they were invited—here was one great cause of falling off in company, for on this occasion they were not invited, and very few subscribed : some people might give us another, that the Admiral

was going away in a few days, and that nothing was to be got in return: be it as it may, with an inducement that ought to have been a powerful one, the attendance was comparatively insignificant. Yet every thing went merrily, and the after-supper speaking was a happy contrast to some recent exhibitions. Nothing could have been better than Sir John Grant's introduction of the toast of the evening; it was unaffected, straight-forward, manly; delivered with fine voice, fine emphasis, and easy action; an impressive address which carried every one with the speaker, made them proud of having so eloquent a spokesman, and elicited such enthusiasm of applause as is rarely heard on similar occasions. And then the gallant old Admiral. No humbug and braggadocio about what he had done, and what he was going to do—no mistaking himself for the Expedition, but on the contrary giving generous praise to the humblest man and boy that belonged to it. One's heart beat high with pride at knowing how honourably the fame of the British Navy had been upheld, and hearing how modestly it was acknowledged, but—

“Modesty with merit is allied.”

Wooden Walls against Wooden Heads all the world over.

We have had a public meeting to consider the propriety of establishing a Lyceum, or perhaps more correctly speaking a Polytechnic Institution, in Calcutta. The Mechanics' Institution, originated five years ago, has been a failure, and the attempt now is to draw together a larger and more influential body of men, European and Native, interested in the cause of Education, than the original design appeared to interest. The Hon'ble the Deputy Governor has taken it by the hand. The Governor-General was applied to—informally however—and he replied that he thought the objects very good and that they would not succeed ;—short, but not satisfactory.

We were interested in the reports of the first appearance on the London Boards of two of our Indian Amateurs. Of Mr. Harvey Tuckett I can say nothing, never having seen him. Of Mr. Stocqueler, the *Modus* of our Theatre, it is enough to say that had we known in what character he was to come out, we need have waited no criticism to learn the result.

How *Modus* can ever have dreamt of such a part as Prince Hal for any appearance, much less a first appearance, is past comprehension. It would have been difficult to select a part in

the whole range of the drama more unsuited to him, his age and figure being decidedly against even a tolerable personation, and his great and varied talent having no scope for full development in any one scene of the play. It has been said that *Modus* aims at the Elliston line of character, but Elliston's was not a line, it was a range; he flew at every thing, and it was rarely that he did not make a hit. If his tragedy was not first-rate it was better than second-rate, and in this he was unlike any other actor, and Elliston alone. The *Rangers* and *Rovers* are what were popularly called his line, but in them it may be safely predicted *Modus* will never be eminently successful. His sprightliness is not the sparkle of the man of wit or fashion, but the devil-may-careishness of the man about town, and his ease is rather of the Coffee-room than the Saloon. But his forte is unquestionably broad farce, and the greater the scope for his natural wit and passion for the ridiculous, untrammelled by the author, the more successful will he always be. His *Jem Baggs* may fairly be said to have been unapproached on any stage, worthy to be placed side by side with the *Jack Ragg* of the late John Reeves. His *Bowbells* in *Pleasant Dreams* was nothing inferior to Liston's, and if

he had come out in any thing approaching these characters, (differing as the last does from the other two,) he would assuredly have been stamped as an invaluable acquisition to the London boards. Or in Wrench's line he must have succeeded, and the papers do not tell us of any one who has supplied *his* loss. Nothing could have been better than his *Caleb Chizzler* in *But However!* Wrench had not half the versatility of *Modus*, and here I don't mean power of playing many characters, but of playing the same character without sameness, as if he cared not a pin for points, satisfied to let nature come out her own way. *Modus* is a man of very rare dramatic power; I believe there is no man known to the boards who could play so many characters so well. To Tragedy he was unequal; yet that he could play well by fits and starts; but his animal spirits were irrepressible, and any level of serious action he could not sustain. As *Macduff* his discovery of the murder of *Duncan* was one of the most powerful things I ever saw or heard on the stage; it would have paralyzed and stricken down a guilty man; yet his scene with *Rosse* when he hears of his castle surprised, and his wife and children slaughtered, was only painful as a failure. One would like to have seen a man of

so much talent, and whose name was so long connected with theatricals in Calcutta, doing something like justice to himself.

Theatricals here are rather at a discount just now, but can one expect this or any other amusement to look very sunny with the thermometer at 90° in a dark room.

Believe me, My dear Squab,

Yours faithfully,

AN IDLER.

Calcutta, May 13th, 1844.

MY DEAR SQUAB,

The March Mail was in before my last letter was written, at least the Express, and I briefly alluded to one or two items of intelligence it brought us ; but there are others which it is impossible to have heard and pass over in silence. The Mail was on the whole a most interesting one. The result of the Irish Trials, the debates in Parliament on Scinde Affairs, on the Vote of Thanks, and on the state of Ireland were all attractive, and have helped us through a dull month very fairly. Sir Robert Peel contrived to make our Governor-General as ridiculous as possible—or rather to advertise him as in a supremely absurd position—anent the Somnauth Gates, and touching his annexation of Scinde he has stamped the character of our proceedings by the line of defence adopted. Not a syllable could be said in its favour that truth and justice could approve, so he resorts to the expedient of necessity.

The Prime Minister of England has propounded from his place in Parliament the Great Robbery Principle, and he does it in the shape of a warning. He says, that when Civilization comes in contact with Barbarism the latter had better look out. Sir Robert Peel does not pretend—never has pretended—to say we were justified in annexing Scinde, but he says we took it because the innate love of theft (or Acquisitiveness) is so great, that we could not help it, and that the robbed must submit because they cannot help it. The only objection to this is the introduction of civilization—making it bear the odium of an offence abhorrent to it. The old proverb is fully as wise as the Minister, and speaks in more honest and unambiguous language; it says “the weakest go to the wall,” and devil-a-bit does Peel improve upon the proverb: he gives no reason, but asserts the fact, and as experience has satisfied us of it we owe him nothing. And this is how the Scinde matter at present stands, allowing the fullest weight to all the arguments in favour of the necessity for fighting: the taking the country is quite a different question. Treachery compelled us to advance and annihilate the power of the Ameers—that is the case of the Government, picked out of correspondence and published as a

Blue Book—black would have been better—but what justified us in appropriating Scinde? That is not in the Blue Book,—but the Minister is ready with his unprincipled, uncontrollable principle. The law of nations is only good among civilized nations—there is no inherent equity or morality belonging to it—nothing to make it respected for its own sake—it is a law *in terrorem* or it is no law at all! When there is no potent voice to expose and resist its infractions it has no obligations! This is England all over; it is only a step in the same ladder which makes the ascent to the Temple of Justice facile or difficult as a party is rich or poor: *that* is the gentility (or civilization) of wealth *versus* the vulgarity (or barbarism) of poverty, and when they come in contact, there is somehow or other an uncontrollable principle which gives money the best of it. What a disgraceful figure England cuts in this affair, having seized a country beyond what she had declared the natural boundary of her empire in India—and for *that* being without the shadow of a pretence of a justification; without even a Radical renegade with the impudence to suggest one. Mr. Roebuck is of opinion that it was right to depose the Ameers, because, according to his account, they flagellated their women with brass-wire whips;

and he thinks it would be unwise to set them at liberty—wrong doers are generally cowards—because they might give us more trouble ; but even Mr. Roebuck cannot suggest a reason why we should have appropriated the soil from which we expelled them.

Without saying a syllable about this doctrine advanced by the Prime Minister of a country which boasts of being in the van of civilization, and which may therefore have an interest in believing it, it may be asked what must really be the view taken of the policy under discussion when all that can be said in its favour is, that it is the result of something inexplicable ! How simply the case presents itself to the honest mind. Either we had justification for all we did, or we had not : if the former, why rely on some abstract idea of necessity ; if the latter, why not admit the wrong and repair it ? Had the French Government made this defence for Admiral Thouars' annexation of the Friendly Islands what should we have said ?—yet surely it would have been as valid in their case as in ours. I would rather agree with Sir Robert in his doctrine than admit his policy in advancing, much less relying upon it. The principle is as the *Times* truly says “Acquisitiveness,” great in its operation, but not

in its morality or justice. I believe that the sensation caused by Sir Robert was not at what he said, but because he said it, and the triumph to party will be that instead of proving England had made a happy exception to the rule of wrong, she justified herself because she followed it. Sir Robert's "great principle" is after all nothing but the old one of might against right, which perfectly explains why it is uncontrollable. It may be controlled when the morality of Government is measured by the simple standard of Right and Wrong, an era not likely to be expedited by a minister's talking of such standard being put aside by some tyranny which justice cannot control. It is the old story,—

"Men are the sport of circumstances, when
'Tis circumstances are the sport of men."

but what is sport to the great principle of "Acquisitiveness" is death to the victims of its experiments.

But again I say, how damning such a defence in this case of our robbery of Scinde. Supposing it were said when starvation comes in contact with abundance, the uncontrollable principle of self-preservation is such that the famished wretch must steal, and this were the answer to an indict-

ment for carrying off a shoulder of mutton ; can there be a doubt that, with some words of sympathy perhaps, the thief would be sent to the House of Correction ? I have heard prisoners talking of some “ uncontrollable principle ” which prompted them to shop-lifting, but I never knew a Judge on the Bench suggest that it would justify a verdict of Not Guilty. Yet the Prime Minister of England, whose words are sure to be heard to the limits of the civilized world, from his place in parliament can say no more for his country than the commonest criminal in the dock has said without effect. Nay, he suggests only a defence that he is ashamed directly to urge, and leaves the crime without even the vulgar charm of gay, bold-faced villainy.

And now as to the vote of thanks. I honour those few men who had the courage to face the obloquy of opposing on principle a popular proposition.

Individually to acknowledge the military genius of a leader and the bravery of his troops is one thing ; to thank them in the name of the country is another : it is impossible to thank them for conduct that led to such and such results without confessing satisfaction at those results ; and how can that be consistent with a belief in ori-

ginal wrong and final injustice. The country ought not to record its thanks except for what it wholly approves, or it confounds all distinction between bravery in a good cause and bravery in a bad one. It may be said that as regards the soldier every cause is to him a good one in which he is commanded to fight, and this is so ; but when a nation has to pass its judgment it ought not to confound* the good and the bad : not for *the way of doing* but for *the thing done*—should its acknowledgments be made. There is not a journal that has alluded to the Scinde business—and what journal has not?—that has not extolled in the highest language the unsurpassed gallantry of our troops ; and how many of them have denounced the policy that made fighting necessary. And so it has no doubt been with thousands of individuals. If, then, we can separate the way of doing from the thing done, if this we can express our detestation of, and that applaud, why when it comes to a question of Parliamentary opinion should there be any difficulty about it ? As observed by the *Examiner*, it was once the course to return the country's thanks for a series of services in the Field, now they are asked for a single battle ; a change by no means for the better : at the same time had the battles of Meanee and Hyderabad been

forced upon us, no honour could have been too great for those who won them.

As it is I ask how men can thank a General for winning victories that consummate a flagrant wrong? how they can offer a national address of praise that we were placed in a position to seize property to which we had not a shadow of title? Those who think we were driven to fight may well thank Sir Charles for all that followed, but to believe that we drove the Ameers to try the last, and still to thank him, is utterly inexplicable. It was observed in the debate that no vote of thanks was passed on the occasion of the victory of Navarino, and it was pretended in reply that the reason was that no declaration of war had been made—a shallow and frivolous pretence for the omission, the real cause of which was that we destroyed the fleet of an old ally, not without immediate provocation, but without sufficient justification.

And now for a few words on Eastern affairs.

From the Punjaub nothing decisive: things are progressing: Heera Singh is out at the elbows and has been applying for assistance to his uncle Goolab Singh, who is master of “the gentlemanly way of saying,—no,” and prefers keeping his coffers untouched for his own exigencies. He

is said to have a design on Cashmere, and to be content to leave others to cut throats at the capital, which may happen at any moment. Akhbar Khan has returned to Cabul where his father's position is threatened, so that Heera Singh is relieved from present anxiety about Peshawur.

From Gwalior and Bundelcund not a word of interest since my last. From Scinde we learn that the country is in a disturbed state, and in a slight engagement in the neighbourhood of Shikarpore, in which a Lieutenant Fitzgerald had gone out to punish some marauders, we got the worst of it and had to retire, losing about 20 men, and the same number wounded.

It is rumoured that the Governor-General has invited the Commander-in-Chief to take his seat in Council to look after Military matters, there being no soldier at the Board; and that Sir C. Napier has been called to take command of the troops on the North-West Frontier. This invitation is obviously of a very flattering character: his Lordship would no doubt request "the honor of His Excellency's Company"; but unless Sir Hugh's love of fighting is somewhat satisfied, he would probably find himself "previously engaged", in the reasonable expectation of being engaged in Gwalior, Bundelcund, or the Punjaub.

A Commander-in-Chief not "tired of war's alarms" will probably prefer the Camp to the Council Chamber : it is just possible he might look upon the "invitation," however prettily worded, as something approaching an affront.

But supposing the invitation given and accepted, is it not calculated to cripple Lord Ellenborough's movements, to interfere with his personal enjoyment ? He told us that his proper place was on the right hand of the Commander-in-Chief. What a noble sacrifice if he really proposes to have Sir Hugh here, that he may himself be out of mischief, and in his proper position ! This, indeed, might almost reconcile the gallant General to the sacrifice.

There was a report the other day that the 64th Regiment, one of those which "struck" at Ferrozepore, had again shown a mutinous spirit on its arrival at Sukkur, but it is not confirmed ; on the contrary the *Delhi Gazette* says it is not true. Still the possibility of a second mutiny has been discussed. The *Friend of India* observes—"A second mutiny about Scinde would be as injurious to the character of Lord Ellenborough's reign, as ever the tragedy of Cabul was to that of Lord Auckland." But he says there will be no second outbreak ! because "any disposition to mutiny

which may be exhibited on the banks of the Indus, will be quietly and effectually extinguished by concessions, beyond the Notification ; that if the troops demand ration money, on the strength of promises made at Ferozepore, they will obtain them—because the effect of a second mutiny in such a position, would be more injurious to the stability of the empire than even the drain on the Treasury which these extra allowances will occasion, and which for any army of 15,000 men would be about seven lakhs a year.”

This prophecy of peace by concession is severe enough in the face of that vain-glorious nonsense about beating down opposition : I said that the Governor-General did concede when he penned his Order : the *Friend* says, he will concede when opposition again stares him in the face.

But will there be another mutiny ? If there be not, it will not be because it has not been invited, by the perfect immunity which has attended the infamous conduct of even the worst of the late refractory regiments. I said in my last I would have had leniency shown under the circumstances where the unsoldierly conduct was limited to passive resistance, but that exemplary punishment should have been inflicted on those whose violent conduct betokened a spirit of disaffection that look-

ed rather for an opportunity of indulgence than any sense of a particular wrong to be redressed. There is much unknown that will some day be cleared up—possibly by the “Mutiny Blue Book” of which the *Friend* writes. Having given Lord Ellenborough credit for conceding, I am not anxious to blame him in aught he did, or left undone after the outbreak assumed so serious an aspect, until more is known. If the troops were induced to march on concessions beyond those made by competent authority, it is difficult to conceive any circumstances under which they should have been allowed to proceed, in the delusion that they could exact just as much as they chose to demand ; be that as it may, the escape from punishment of the whole, except indeed the least guilty, is a dangerous experiment, which we can only hope may not prove a fatal one.

To talk about second mutiny—such a mutiny as we might expect it to be—being only as injurious to the character of Lord Ellenborough’s reign as the Cabul disaster was to Lord Auckland’s is idle. Dreadful as that affair was, it would sink into insignificance compared with this. The one did not affect the stability of the empire ; it only led us to enlarge it by seizing Scinde : the other might leave us in considerable doubt of holding

what we have long been accustomed to call our own. Lord Auckland was much to be pitied, for,—a man of peace, who would have devoted the whole energies of his mind to the internal improvement of the country, and the amelioration of the condition of its people—it was his fate to have to carry out a policy which ended in, I cannot say a war,—but discomfiture and disgrace. Lord Ellenborough on the other hand is a man of war,—in this country at least; a gentleman who would wear armour if there were any modern precedent for it, and who would, as it is, live in military harness if it were not for the heat of the climate. All his flourishes are military, and he has blown his own trumpet bravely. He has fixed his proper place as on the right hand of the Commander-in-Chief and he has caused himself to be written down the “Friend of the Army.” He has given away gold mohurs and oranges in the fight, and medals and sweetmeats afterwards; in his military *furor* he has sent to Coventry for a Ribbon of India, and every thing Civil to Bath. If he *should* quit these shores with the shouts of a mutinous army in his ears, may we not ask what Mrs. Grundy would say? I mean the historian; but it is too serious a matter to joke about.

Our intelligence from China comes down to the 26th March. Sir Henry Pottinger is still vigorous in his determination to uphold the integrity of our Commercial Treaty. He has published an Ordinance, declaring specifically that all trade to the Northward of the 32nd degree of North Latitude is unlawful, the penalty to be a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars, and ships to be seized, notwithstanding any transfer of property therein, in liquidation of the same.

The late Mauritius papers complain bitterly of the new regulation touching Cooly Emigration, restricting the departure of labourers to this port, and limiting the number to 500 a month, or 6,000 per annum. The Governor has been addressed and urgently requested to increase the number to 12,000, as the lowest supply that will meet the demand, allowing for desertion, departure and mortality. Great complaint is made, too, that the 500 per month even, had not arrived. His Excellency's reply was that he was equally surprised at the latter circumstance, and that he had written to Mr. Caird (the agent here) on the subject, but that as to increasing the supply he could not do it without the co-operation of this Government.

It would seem that the Coolies, who have been described here as such poor fools that they can be imposed on by any scoundrel who has an object in misleading them, are fully alive to their own increased value—from the circumstance of emigration having been checked, and even the promised supply of labour not being forthcoming, and are demanding wages that the planters declare they cannot afford to pay them. The *Cerneen* says, “their pretensions are becoming more exaggerated every day”, and that they refuse the monthly wages of 5 rupees, while “the streets and highways are swarming with cooly venders (!) as if the country had spent fifteen thousand dollars solely for the purpose of having a few thousand more cake-sellers.” It is also said they are “deserting” and that 8,000 are absent from their work. I do not clearly understand what this means. From the Civil Commissaries having been directed to enquire of the large landholders the number of labourers absent from their respective districts, one might imagine that desertion, which would be a breach of contract between master and servant, but we cannot receive this interpretation without supposing a very inefficient authority on the part of the local magistrates whom we have been led to believe a nu-

merous, intelligent and active body. If they cannot protect the planter against the cooly we shall be led to believe they cannot protect the cooly against the planters. But it is probable that the *Cerncen* uses the term desertion incautiously, and that he means no more than that the number of labourers had diminished; *some* perhaps by desertion, others from having again sought their fortunes elsewhere, and more having set up of their own account as "cooly venders," or very small country gentlemen. Be this as it may the insufficiency of labour is distinctly affirmed, and the refusal of 5 rupces—of course in addition to rations, &c. is strong evidence of it, as indeed is Sir William Gomm's application to the Colonial Agent. A very heavy responsibility rests on this Government in the course they have pursued. It is useless to question the right they had to set aside an Order of Council—they have done it. If the Home Government disapproved the last Act they would of course repudiate the right, which does not exist under the Charter. Our authorities here may legislate, but they cannot legislate in a spirit repugnant to provisions made by an authority superior to their own. The Governor-General in Council is powerful, but the Queen in Council is a little more so.

The *Cerneen* says very well of his local authorities, but he should rather have said of ours—“Have they explained to themselves the powerful motives which overcame the scruples of the Home Government and induced them to throw open to us the gates of India? Do they think that it is without any object that Great Britain endeavours to provide all its colonies with the number of hands they require? Do they not discover lurking behind all those encouragements offered to the immigration of Indian and African labourers into such of its possessions as grow sugar, some elevated political and commercial views? Do they not think that the question of the duties on foreign Sugar is intimately connected with that of emigration, and that it is with a view to meeting a dangerous competition, that our Home Government wish to ensure us effective and cheap labour?” No doubt it will be said all this has been considered, and that it would be inpertinence to surmise ought to the contrary. Still those will do it who are satisfied that the supply of labour is insufficient, with the double evil of raising wages beyond the means of payment with any profit to the employer.

I wish that our Friends at Mauritius would join us in arguing this question of emigration on

a higher and more unassailable ground than that of the commercial prudence of supplying labourers where they are wanted. It is undoubted, but it is open to the miserable assaults of the humanity-mongers of the world, who make a party by imposing on the weak and credulous, and who cry slavery as parrots do a name, and are as proud of the notice their clamour secures them, with just as little intelligence of what they say. The stupidity or dishonesty of those who have stamped Cooly Emigration as slavery has never been exceeded; the hardihood of lying seems to have been in proportion to the care taken that there should be nothing the whole world might not know and must not approve of. I am satisfied that no amount of benefit conferred on Mauritius and on the people who consume its produce, and blessing on those finding profitable employment and happy homes on the Island, would silence these hypocritical slanderers, who are deaf and blind to the slavery of ignorance and destitution about them. I would therefore rather meet them with their own cry, and reiterate the truth that it is slavery to confine a man to a spot in which he cannot gain his bread, or to limit his whereabouts for the exercise of his industry or intelligence, whatever it may be. I would ask these empty

bellowers of No Slavery to tell me what but slavery is such interference with the natural liberty of man? This is the argument with which these people should be met. From Mauritius I would rather hear them say, "Do not prevent labourers coming to us for it is their right to do so," than, "Provide us with labourers for we need them." The higher ground is the safer in the end. I am sorry that on hearing of the interference with emigration their indignation should, apparently, have been excited only on account of the probable inconvenience and loss to themselves: we see over and over again, "our wants," and "the demand for labour" and complaints about "high wages"—all very natural, and nothing unreasonable, but something selfish, and much inferior to the great and irresistible argument founded on the liberty of the subject, enforcing which they would be strongly supporting their own interests, with all the credit of urging the obligations of a great constitutional principle.

There has been a statement put forth that will no doubt find its way home, to the effect that there are a very large number of labourers out of work. The first assertion made in the article to which I allude, that there are 10,000 coolies on the island in a worse state than they were

in this country, is altogether inconsistent with the fact that the Planters have just petitioned the Governor to use his influence in having the supply of labourers increased from 6,000 to 12,000 per annum : it is inconsistent too with the fact of the Governor having applied to Mr. Caird to know why the 500 per month has not been sent ? the reason having been that Mr Anderson thought 200 would be sufficient and named that number before he left Calcutta. All this looks as if there were a deficiency of labour, and indeed it is impossible to believe that had the fact been that 10,000 persons were working for from 1 to 3 rupees monthly, his Excellency would not have known, and stated it. The *Cerneen* states that the streets and highways were swarming with coolies gaining their living by vending small wares, but it was also said that 5 rupees a month were refused as wages. If it be true then that there are many working for from 1 to 3 it must clearly be from choice ; from a preference of the style of work that is so much less liberally remunerated ; and it is too much to say, as we are told in the statement in question, that Mauritius has been saved by Emigration at the expense of from 5 to 10,000 coolies, as if there were that number (or any) in excess of the actual demand. *That* is positively negatived by the

correspondence that took place between the Governor and the Planters. The statement about hard task-masters making their labourers work and not paying them partakes in it's generality of the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* style of writing. I disbelieve it. It is a charge against the local authorities as much as against the Planters, unsustained by any evidence and with every probability against its truth ; for why should men who want more labour than they can procure, ill-use and drive from their estates the willing labourer. Then we come to a statement that also smacks strongly of the Slavery party. We are told that it seems to the writer as if the Indian labourer were literally sold. I know not "seems" but I know it is not so. Sold by the Importer ! Why did not the writer say what he meant by Importer, when the Government has the importation entirely in it's own hands.

I have a statement before me on which reliance may be placed ; it throws some light on the matters above alluded to.

About 200 Coolies arrived on the Island from Bombay : they were in a sickly state, and in other respects unfitted for ordinary labour in the plantations ; there was difficulty, therefore, in getting them employment, and the party through whose means they had been brought there were obliged

to give them work, though not at that time requiring hands. These people were paid Rs. 3 a month, which is stated to have been as much as they were worth with reference to the market price of labour, which up to February was Rs. 5 a month, and they are believed to be the only labourers working at a lower rate.

The engagement of many in various other avocations is easily accounted for: they are for the most part, if not entirely, men who have been some time in the Island, and who received from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per month, when it was very difficult to procure labour on any terms. Having accumulated considerable sums, they were sufficiently independent to resist the reduction of wages, preferring to trust to their own resources.

Among late literary arrivals we have had Mr. Stocqueler's *Hand Book of India*, well spoken of I see by the London Press. I shall confine my remarks to what he writes of the Press of India. Here is a passage on which it is necessary to say something.

“ Of the character of the Indian press, it is not easy to speak in *unqualified* terms of satisfaction. Unlike the press of other free countries, it is the organ, not of the people, but of the executive and (with slight exceptions) the handful of Europeans scattered throughout India as merchants,

trades-people, lawyers, and Indigo planters. Nor can it well be otherwise, if the object of its conductors be to increase rather than to destroy their capital. Readers must be looked for amongst the intelligent few—not the masses of millions to whom even their own written language is a sealed book: and the ‘intelligent few,’ who betake themselves to India either to make fortunes, or to eat that bread which the difficulty of obtaining employment denies them in England, care little, generally speaking, for the interests of the country at large. It hence becomes the unavoidable policy of the editorial fraternity to render their columns subservient to the welfare and amusement of the army, the civil service, and the other classes of Europeans; and if they do occasionally discuss the merits of those acts of Government which are intended for the good of the empire at large, it is not because they expect thereby materially to serve the thousands of taxpayers, but because it is becoming in a public journalist at least to make an effort to acquire an influence over the councils of the rulers and to appear to be alive to their proceedings. A press to be powerful must have a large and enlightened public at its back or (for whether it leads or follows the community is still a question) it must be the representative of thoughts and wishes which can ultimately ensure their own realization by some constitutional—or, we had almost written, brute—power. The Indian press has nothing of this. It rests for support chiefly on the *services* and the handful of Englishmen above referred to; and in proportion as it brings their interests prominently before the Government, and promotes a discussion of their views, its proprietors are rewarded in their outlay of capital.”

I cannot agree with the above, but I do not profess to understand the whole of it. What is the meaning of the Indian Press being the organ of the executive I know not: I should like Sir John Hobhouse to reconcile this with his character of its blackguardism. By what *subserviency* the *Englishman* made it's way Mr. Stocqueler is the best authority, but I would rather believe that he has written loosely, than that he intended to give any grounds for the charge that may have been brought against the independence of that Journal. *If* they *occasionally* discuss Government measures, it is that they may *appear* alive to the interests concerned! But the Indian Press is not powerful—it has none of the elements of power because it has not a large and enlightened public at its back! It must be subservient to classes or it will not pay! I shall say nothing of the high honour and principle this ascribes to the *Services*, the members of which it would be folly to deny are numerous enough to support a dozen papers, but I deny the fact point blank. I say it is not the case, and that a paper that is conducted without a wish to curry favour with any set of men, and which espouses no one interest in preference to others, is the paper that will best prosper, if it be conducted with only average ability.

The *Englishman* is called the *Military Chronicle*, and I understood it to be, so to say, *the Military Journal*, when I came to this country ; the *Hurkaru* on the other hand was called The Civil Service Paper. I am not aware of any subserviency in the latter to the welfare and amusement of that body in preference to others, nor can I call to mind any remarkable occasions on which it has assumed the position or tone of an advocate on it's behalf : how can I possibly suppose the *Englishman* subservient to the army, when I remember all it has written of the Afghan disasters, the roastings of the enemy—which was so promptly taken up at home—and the slanderous attacks on such a man as the late Eldred Pottinger. True it is that a paper may address itself more to one class than another, and may desire to become the organ of that body, but this is no more than is the case in England, while the inducement to such an aim is less, because the widest circulation is comparatively a limited one. A paper in India can only have a really good circulation by numbering all classes ; if it has a really good circulation, it may be a property worth say from £3,000 to £7,000 a year. Is there not then an aggregate public whose support might induce

a man to be independent, even if his inclinations were servile !

When the *Calcutta Star* was started, it addressed itself to no particular section of the community here, nor body of the Europeans in India—still less did it seek to enlist the suffrages of the Natives by playing on their vanity and feeding their self-esteem. With a paper called a Military paper on the one side, and a paper called the Civilians' Journal on the other it entered the field, careless whom it displeased by the publication of opinions honestly believed to be true, and material to the public good—and what has been the result ? There are papers with a larger circulation, but there never was one that met with greater success. It has a very much larger circulation in little more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ years than as I am informed the *Englishman* had in more than double the time, and I have very little hesitation in saying, that here, where it is best known, it has a larger *bond fide* circulation than any Paper in Calcutta has, or ever has had. I mention this because it negatives what the *Hand Book* says, and which in my opinion implies a lower character and greater subserviency of the Press than even it asserts.

While on the subject of books I may notice the promised appearance, to-morrow, of the first number of a New Quarterly Publication, *The Calcutta Review*, a publication I have long desired to see established, and of the success of which, fairly conducted, there can be no doubt. In this I may possibly hold a somewhat singular opinion, for I have heard it said over and over again that such a periodical would not answer,—that in fact nothing here would pay in a literary way but a newspaper, which was regarded more in the light of a necessary than a luxury. When discussing the advantages of such a journal as is now about to appear, I have been met with half a dozen instances of failure, and the assurance that in bygone times there was nevertheless an amount of talent in Calcutta perfectly surprising. I have no desire to depreciate that talent, which principally lives in the memory of some few survivors; but I believe with less talent even, such a periodical would now have a better chance of success than could have been looked for a quarter of a century ago. We are not quite so much amateur authors as we were then, and there is an amount of energy rife in the present day that would have been to a degree plebeian in the days

of our fathers. But what is of immense importance, is the augmented interest with which India is regarded, and it is impossible that this interest should subside. It certainly might flag for a time in the event of her being wisely governed, of which however there is unhappily no immediate prospect : wars and rumours of wars have kept attention fixed on her of late, but, without them, the comparatively near neighbourhood that has been established with Great Britain, and the changes that must follow the expiration of the present Charter—but not without a fight that will be commenced some few years before they can be settled—will keep alive such an interest in this country as must make any publication devoted to a pourtrayal of her condition, political, moral and social, not only advantageous as a speculation, but a valuable offering in the great cause of human improvement. The *Calcutta Review* will take the leading Quarterlies as a model. I have seen the first No. in sheets, and may truly say that it holds out fair promise of being the ablest periodical of any-thing like a similar character that has ever issued from the press of India.

When the representatives of the Four Hundred went up to the Governor-General with an Address which was to have been signed by—that is,

was open to the signature of, the public of Calcutta, his Lordship in a reply that was cleverly contemptuous, spoke of this town as the commercial capital of Bengal. Straws show which way the wind blows, and a word may indicate a foregone conclusion. The Governor-General had then concluded that Calcutta would be no more than he described it, and I have very little doubt that ere long we shall all be as wise on that subject as our betters. It is to be hoped it won't make people very unhappy that Allahabad should be *the* Capital, as far as being the seat of Government can make it so, and that instead of a Governor-General we should have a Deputy Governor only, without a Council, but of course with Judicial and Revenue Boards, Agra being provided for in the same way; all Military and Political arrangements of course having their birth at head-quarters. All this I hear has been cut out here and is fully expected to meet with approval at home, and provided it does not increase the expense of Government, there can be no objection to it. The dignity of being the seat of Government is all moonshine; the advantage of it to Calcutta is never likely to be very great, and I don't know when it could be taken away with less offence than while we have nothing to

regret. The real importance of Calcutta can never be affected by any arrangements of this kind. I literally know nothing that we should miss except a carriage and four occasionally on the Course. As the present Capital of British India has never been even embellished because it was so, we are not likely to miss any expenditure of public funds for public improvements, and I believe it possible to live a century without the countenance of a G. G. as happily as we have contrived to live the best part of the last two years. Allahabad would appear to be just as good a locality as any other for the residence of a Governor who has no fancy for residing anywhere in particular, and even for those to come, it would be difficult to state any remarkable advantages that this commercial town possesses.

So the Government may take itself whithersoever it willeth—we offer no opposition to be beaten down—provided only two things; the first that we are not declared to be in the Mofussil and subject to Company's law; and the second that there is no interference with the course of the Hooghly.

The Ex-Ameers of Scinde arrived here two or three weeks ago, since which we have heard nothing about them. The Prime Minister of Eng-

land spoke of them as distinguished and unfortunate, and informed Parliament that orders had been sent out to this country that they should be treated with all the respect due to their rank and misfortunes. It was said, too, that no niggardly economy should be allowed to interfere with such comforts and indulgencies as could consistently be granted them. The Governor of Bombay anticipated the wishes of the Home Government, and though he could not afford them the accommodation he would probably have desired, he at once gave them an audience and treated them with every respect. We read, too, that he visited them after they were embarked, and, in a spirit that does him honor, busied himself in seeing that every possible arrangement had been made for their convenience, and that might render less irksome the voyage before them.

I do not believe they were taken to Dum-Dum in hackeries; on the contrary, I think it likely that carriages were hired for them, but I have heard that they were not received by a Secretary, or even an A. D. C. They are not permitted to come to Calcutta, but may receive any visitors, that dangerous class of men *lawyers* only excepted. You will smile, but I tell you a fact. Fairy-Hall is the name of their re-

sidence at Dum-Dum ; it it a pretty name for a prison, in the mouth of a gaoler ; in the ears of those confined it may sound something like a mockery. *Bar-a-set* is a good deal more appropriate for a stronghold, but *Dum-Dum* has the advantage in hinting pretty strongly that it may be dangerous to say anything about them. Nevertheless I shall say at least as much as I have warranty for in the language of Sir Robert Peel.

He ordered them to be very well treated, and I think they are very shabbily treated : if they are all that Sir Charles Napier described them, why No. 1, Chowringhee would have been a fitting residence, and would have had the advantage of being more airy than fairy, while I will answer for Mr. King having done his spiriting gently. Some of them are to go to Baraset, and I believe in the cold weather to Hazareebaugh, where there is ample accommodation, and where to do Lord Ellenborough justice I believe he desired to send them, but for foolish expenditure inconsiderately incurred at Baraset, and which after all will have been money wasted. But the Ex-Ameers have not been treated with "the respect due to their misfortune." Perhaps Lord Ellenborough won't admit their misfortune, and so withholds respect. If then he prefers

taking Sir C. Napier's view of the case to Sir R. Peel's—why not send them to goal at once. His Lordship is certainly in an awkward dilemma, and may be excused for not knowing exactly what to do: he gave them an audience at Barrackpore the other day.

In one of the late London Papers I see mentioned rather a curious case that came before the Prerogative Court. A paper was propounded as the will of a Mr. Hobart, who died suddenly in May last. It directed among other things, that a sum of £4,425 should be devoted for an equestrian statue to be erected to his own memory, and, extraordinary as it may appear, this was the principal ground upon which its validity was contested. Drs. Adam and Robertson contended that the absurdity of devoting several thousand pounds to such a purpose was a proof of incapacity, but the Court without calling on the other side said, "there was nothing to establish the unsoundness of the deceased's mind, apart from the paper in question, and as to the absurd legacy of the Statue, it was certainly the foolish bequest of a vain man, but it did not justify the inference that he was incapable of performing a reasonable act." One can hardly imagine Mr. Hobart's relatives offering such an insult to his

memory, and it is charitable to suppose they thought they had some better grounds for the proceeding. But what excuse is there for Sir H. Jenner Fust taking upon himself to call the legacy absurd, or the deceased a foolish vain man ! The vanity would have been in spending the money in that way while he was alive, as it might have been supposed to be for the pleasure of seeing himself rivalling Charles at Charing Cross, or some, or all, of the more modern, mounted, royal noddies. As to the absurdity of it, the charge is perfectly gratuitous ; at any rate it is no more absurd than spending thousands in perishable portraits, as many very staid and supposed-to-be-sensible people do while they are in the flesh. Are they less absurd in elaborately carved gold frames than Mr. Hobart would be on a plain stone horse : perhaps a horse was his hobby, and he fancied he had a good seat, —then why not be taken in a saddle as well as an arm chair ? I will answer for it that Mr. Hobart on horse-back would not look so absurd as Sir Herbert Jenner Fust in his robes on the Bench. But was it the amount that made it absurd ? Certainly not, for it was not disproportioned to the work, and possibly a desire to foster the fine arts, to give some favourite

sculptor a good job, was part of the inducement. It would be rather an impudent thing to try and set aside a man's will because he left a sum of money for the erection of a mausoleum over his remains, though he even requested that his widow might be done in marble, weeping for his loss; or what should we have thought of a Commission of Lunacy against the testator had he ordered an equestrian statue to be executed in his life time. One would really imagine that gentlemen were not in the habit of riding, or that stone horses at any rate were sacred to great heroes and defunct kings. An Equestrian Statue of George III, or George IV, can have no possible interest for any one but as works of Art, and one of Mr. Hobart would therefore be just as acceptable; while if the public were admitted to see it they would have an additional pleasure in knowing that he paid for it himself.

But I have alluded to this case of alleged absurdity and vanity, because it reminded me of one on which I should like to hear judgment from the Prerogative Court.

A gentleman in Calcutta, who has had something to do with public affairs since March 1842, has presented himself with a magnificent piece of plate, on which are emblazoned the deeds of arms

in which he has been directly and indirectly concerned, "ample room and verge enough" being left for deeds yet to be done. This original idea of self-glorification has been splendidly executed by a London house, and is now constantly exhibited on a certain *quasi* royal table.

Now far be it from me to say that it betokens absurdity or vanity; I only ask whether it is less absurd or vain than Mr. Hobart's legacy, and what Sir Herbert Jenner Fust would say if it were hereafter made a pretence for setting aside the gentleman's will? In Mr. Hobart's case the vanity, if such it were, was the principal proof that could be adduced of "incapacity"; in this one to be sure there would be abundant other evidence.

I told you in my last that Theatricals were at a discount: the Theatre is closed, and no man knoweth when it will open again. It has been an unfortunate season: a large sum of money must have been taken at the doors, but the outgoings have been larger than the incomings. The lamented death of Mr. Morell, the mortgagee, was perhaps its heaviest blow: had he lived, come what might, the House would hardly have been shut for longer than the ordinary recess. It has many well-wishers,

but no friend; no one to say, "reduce your expenses and carry on; the future may redeem the past; in the mean time here is a bank." The *Calcutta Review* says the theatre has more actors than patrons, a figurative sarcasm that is a little too severe: it is not very long since we saw a house crowded to the walls: *Venice Preserved* brought for Mrs. Deacle's Benefit a bumper, and during the season there were many excellent houses. There has been much said about want of support: it might have been more liberal, but not want of support, but too heavy expenditure has involved the concern.

At the beginning of last season, say about November, the salaries were something as under—

Mrs. Deacle,	.....	.....Rs. 400 p. month.
Mrs. Leach,	.....	.....,, 400 ,, ,,
Miss Cowley,	.....	.....,, 200 ,, ,,
Mr. Vining,	.....	.....,, 450 ,, ,,
Mr. and Mrs. Barry,	.....	.....,, 400 ,, ,,
Mr. and Mrs. Ormonde,	.....	.....,, 600 ,, ,,

————Rs. 2,450

In addition to this there were the whole of the subordinates to pay; so much was in fact paid for services, that the Theatre was rather a Professional than an Amateur one. It is just possible that had there been no original debt the re-

ceipts might have been sufficient to keep things going ; as it was, this was out of the question. Add the salaries of the subordinates to the above ; the non-professional establishment, the orchestra, wardrobe, lighting, constables, &c. &c. and it may be safely said Rs. 5,000 per month would leave nothing to spare. The average number of performances may be taken as three in a month—so that the curtain could never be drawn up under an expense of nearly Rs. 1,700 a night. Is it very astonishing the Theatre should not pay ? In addition to the above salaries the management was at the expense of paying the passage out of the several parties, and this alone for those who came last year cannot have been much (if any thing) under Rs. 5,000. Mr. Vining was the only one whose engagement could possibly have been other than a dangerous speculation to the Theatre. He was a gentleman, a good actor, and with varied talent ; he had intimate acquaintance with the stage, and great experience in management, to which he was able to bring singularly courteous and conciliating manners. His departure was very much to be regretted, and it is just now we feel how fortunate it would have been—and not improbably for himself—had he remained in Calcutta.

The Company is broken up. Mrs. Leach and Mrs. Ormonde, both women of great talent, particularly the former, have left this for a larger than the mimic stage : they are in their graves. Mr. Vining we may soon hear of on the London Boards. Mrs. Deacle has gone to the Straits, and thence I presume proceeds to Bombay. Mr. Barry it is said is turning his attention rather to his Easil than to the Boards, and Mr. Ormonde is leaving the country. Mrs. Barry and Miss Cowley alone remain.

And what is to become of the Theatre ? Are we to see it converted to some other use, a Chapel, a School, a Hospital ? or will any thing be done to preserve it for the ends for which it was designed—good, in the opinion of a number quite sufficient to uphold them if they desire to do so. It may safely be prophesied that if the *Sans Souci* be transformed, it will be long before Calcutta has again a Theatre. Dramatic entertainments may indeed be attempted in hot and inconvenient rooms, but the drama will know no fitting Temple for years to come.

The evening of the 24th instant—the Queen's Birth-day is to be a gala night. The Governor-General has invited, by advertisement, the members of the Services, but as he cannot very con-

veniently shut out the spectacle from the rest of the community, there will be some thousands of admiring eyes without the walls of Government House. Affairs are not quite ripe for fighting, so his Lordship has thrown his whole soul into the Fire-Work *fête*. Already the gates and portico of the great mansion are dimly visible through bamboo frame-work, dedicated, I presume, to illuminations, and in many parts of the Midaun mysterious erections of scaffolding involve pyrotechnic designs, which are being prepared in divers encampments from a due regard to the public safety. Some few gentlemen who are in the secret are in a high state of excitement, and cannot help hinting that people will see what they will see, and what they really never would have believed. This great baby-show will cost a large sum of money, which might have been laid out to greater advantage, indeed could not have been more unprofitably squandered. But there will be fire, and smoke, and noise—of course purely in honour of Her Majesty—and if his Lordship has made arrangements for beating down the possible opposition of the elements, which just at this season are a little unruly, he will go to bed a happier “if not a wiser man.”

This goes by the *Hindostan* which leaves on the morning of the 15th. She had 92 passengers booked, exclusive of children and servants two days ago! Is this patronising the O. and P. Company or not?

Yours ever,

My dear Squab,

AN IDLER.

